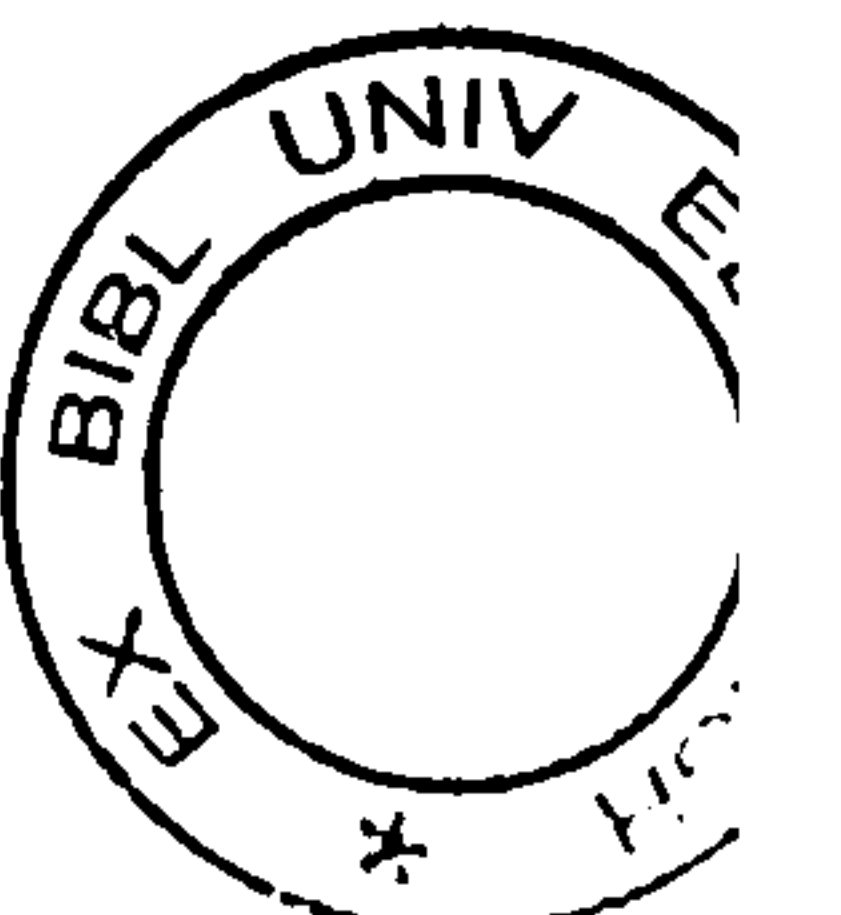


# **The Western Highlands and Isles, 1616-1649: Allegiances during the “Scottish Troubles”**

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# CONTENTS

Contents .....	i
Declaration.....	ii
Abstract.....	iii
Acknowledgments .....	iv
Standardizations.....	v
Abbreviations.....	vi
Chapter I: Introduction .....	1
Chapter II: The Western Highlands and Isles in Context .....	22
Chapter III: The Western Highlands and Isles' Place in the British Kingdom: Colonialism or State Formation?.....	61
Chapter IV: Central Government and the Western Highlands and Isles.....	87
Chapter V: Religion from Reformation to War .....	122
Chapter VI: Indebtedness in the Western Highlands and Isles .....	153
Chapter VII: Western Highlands and Isles Allegiances.....	186
Chapter VIII: Conclusion.....	220
Appendix:	
1: Map of The Highlands c.1400 .....	232
2: Map of The Western Highlands.....	233
3: Map of The Lordship of the Isles 1284-1493.....	234
4: Clan Map with Civil War Allegiances.....	235
5: Attendance Record of Annual Meetings 1616-1642 .....	237
6: Royal Rent Payments from Argyll and Portions of Inverness-shire, 1600-1635.....	244
Bibliography .....	250

## **Declaration Statement**

I, the undersigned, confirm that this thesis has been composed completely by me, and that no part of this work has been published in any form.

Reference to, quotation from, and discussion of the work of any other person has been acknowledged within this thesis.

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April 20, 2006



## **Abstract**

This thesis examines the political, religious, and economic circumstances in the Western Highlands and Isles between 1616 and 1649. This is a period in Highland history in which the clans of the Western Highlands and Isles were drawn onto the national theatre through the policies of James VI, only to be allowed to slip back into their autonomous roles during the reign of Charles I and the start of the Covenant Movement. This study looks at particular aspects of central government's policies toward the region, as well as the religious state of affairs and financial position of the chiefs in the Western Highlands and Isles. By examining these factors it becomes possible to deduce how they affected the motives of allegiance and how the involvement of the clans of the Western Highlands and Isles temporarily altered the course of the Civil Wars. The main focus of this thesis is to determine why the Western Highlands and Isles temporarily entered the Civil Wars, 1644-45, what determined their allegiance to the Covenanters or Royalists and why some clans shifted from one faction to the other.

Chapter one is an introduction, defining the geographical region, the inclusion or exclusion of particular clans, and the relevant sources both primary and secondary. Chapter two focuses on the more general history of the Western Highlands and Isles during the reigns of James VI and Charles I. This chapter allows the region to be placed in a broader Scottish context and forms the foundation for the following chapters which will detail the particular situations relevant to allegiance formation. Chapter three looks at the theoretical models of colonialism and state formation in an attempt to determine where the Western Highlands and Isles fit into the British polity. Included in this chapter is an analysis of Wales and Ireland to provide a comparative analysis to the Western Highlands and Isles to calculate whether policies toward the region were focused on colonialism or state formation.

Chapter four focuses on the political relationship between central government and the Western Highlands and Isles. The main emphasis is placed on the effects that the annual meetings between clan chiefs and the Privy Council had on the region and, more importantly, how the end of the annual meetings allowed the chiefs to shift their attention away from national issues and back to local matters. Chapter five illustrates the state of religion in the region. This chapter looks at the difficulties faced by the Church of Scotland in trying to establish a strong religious foundation in the region, and its attempts to overcome the remoteness of the region as well as the inherent differences between the Lowland clergy and the Gaelic culture. Chapter six examines the issue of indebtedness among the chiefs in the Western Highlands and Isles. The first half of the chapter explains the source of financial difficulties and the mechanisms of the newly formed "debt networks". The second half of the chapter is made up of three case studies, Clanranald, Lamont, and Campbell of Glenorchy, to illustrate the processes of acquiring debts and attempts to prevent utter financial ruin.

Chapter seven explains how the political, religious, and economic situations affected allegiances in the Western Highlands and Isles. Examples are given showing how various clans were affected by one or more factors. Chapter eight, the conclusion, focuses on the underlying issues of legitimacy of power and social hierarchy inherent in the formation of allegiances and how these issues developed out of the political, religious, and economic situations during the first half of the seventeenth century.



## Acknowledgements

In the three years it took to write this dissertation a great number of debts have been accumulated which merit a sincere thank you. I would first like to thank my two supervisors, Dr. Julian Goodare and Prof. Michael Lynch. Without the support and encouragement from these two superb scholars this project would not have reached completion. I will be forever indebted to Dr. Goodare for being my “sounding board” for hours on end at Susie’s Diner and for always being concerned not just about my academic work but about my personal well-being. Likewise, I would like to thank Prof. Lynch for meeting with me on several occasions and allowing me to verify that I was on the right track; his encouragement and excitement helped see this dissertation through to the finish.

I would also like to thank the numerous scholars and friends who have been generous with their time to meet with me over the years to discuss various aspects of my work. The most difficult chapter to write was on the economics and indebtedness of the chieftains which I had the fortune of discussing with Dr. Douglas Watt and Dr. Sharon Adams. A sincere thank you to Dr. Watt for helping me unravel the relationship between the chieftains and their lawyers and their ensuing indebtedness. One debt that I do not know if I can ever repay is to Dr. Sharon Adams. The lunches and coffees we had not only aided the academic aspect of this work but also saved my sanity. Sitting over coffee tracing the money trail of Clanranald was probably the most exciting bit of analytical work done for this project and our mutual excitement during that meeting reassured me in my skills and my future career endeavor. Among the numerous other scholars I would like to thank are Dr. Jane Dawson for discussing with me the Argyll family, Dr. John Scally for meeting with me to discuss politics and Hamilton, and Dr. Domhnall Uilleam Stiubhart for taking the time to discuss my overall work and supporting my conclusions. I must also thank Dr. Tom Webster for not only taking the time to read my religion chapter but also for his friendship. None of these scholars may be held responsible for any views here; all errors are my own responsibility.

The Department of Scottish History also deserves a great deal of thanks. The support, friendliness, and encouragement of the faculty, especially Dr. Steve Boardman, Dr. Ewan Cameron, Dr. Alex Murdoch, is greatly appreciated. I can not forget Pauline MacLean, Department Secretary, who is a master of office management and wielded wonders for me in regards to getting me on a particular person’s diary.

Last, but certainly not least, I would like to thank my family and extended family. There are so many of you to thank for your encouragement the list could go on forever, Dad, Nanny, Margolyn, but I have to thank the two most important people in my life. To my brother, Bryan, I can not put into words how much your cheerleading helped me through the tough times, when I didn’t think I could do this you always did; I love you baby. To my mom, Maureen, I don’t know what to say. You are not only my mom but my best friend, without you in my corner I don’t know what I would do. This has been quite an adventure and I’m glad I had you to share it with, but I guess we’ve always been there for each other through our adventures; I love you to Jupiter. Gump.

## Standardizations

The entirety of this thesis is written in American English in regard to both spelling and grammar. In the few incidents where there is confusion over vocabulary the British term is preferred for the benefit of the readership.

All clan spellings have been standardized in accordance with the Standing Council of Scottish Chiefs, The Court of The Lord Lyon, and the *Scottish Clan and Family Encyclopedia* by George Way of Plean & Romilly Squire. Gaelic personal names have been Anglicized, for example Ruaridh has been changed to Rory. However, where a person is better known by their Gaelic name that has been preferred, such as Coll MacDonald, Laird of Colonsay, who is better known to Highland historians as Colla Ciotach.

Every attempt has been made to modernize the spelling of place names in accordance with the Ordnance Survey.

All sums of money are given in £Scots unless otherwise stated. The £Scot was worth one-twelfth of a £Sterling and a merk was worth two-thirds of a £Scots.



## Abbreviations

<i>APS</i>	<i>Acts of the Parliaments of Scotland</i> , 12 vols., ed. T. Thomson and C. Innes (Edinburgh, 1814-75)
HMC	Historical Manuscripts Commission
NAS	National Archives of Scotland
NLS	National Library of Scotland
<i>RPC</i>	<i>Register of the Privy Council of Scotland</i> , 37 vols., ed. J.H. Burton et al. (Edinburgh, 1877- )
<i>SHR</i>	<i>Scottish Historical Review</i>
SHS	Scottish History Society
<i>TGSI</i>	<i>Transactions of the Gaelic Society of Inverness</i>



# **Chapter 1**

## **Introduction**

On 15 June 1638 the Duke of Hamilton wrote to Charles I stating that support for the monarch was prevalent in the Western Highlands and Isles, but warned that their allegiance was “less however from affection to the king than from spleen against Lord Lorne”.<sup>1</sup> It is on this backdrop that the role of the Western Highlands and Isles in the Scottish Revolution can best be seen. Whereas the majority of Scotland had divided between support for the Covenant Movement and support for Charles I out of religious and political differences, the Western Highlands and Isles’ support for the Covenanters and royalists was based more on local politics and personal agendas than on the national religious and political platforms of the two factions. Therefore, Hamilton’s warning that support for the king was based on animosity towards Lord Lorne is indicative of the local politics and personal agendas of the clans in the region that impacted their allegiance formations.

The rise in importance of local politics in the Western Highlands and Isles was the result of the collapse of the annual meetings between the chiefs of the region and the Privy Council. Prior to the Regulations of 1616, in which central government dictated that a meeting was to be held every July,<sup>2</sup> the policies aimed at subduing the clans in the Western Highlands and Isles were a disjointed amalgamation of personal agendas devised by James VI and various courtiers. The arbitrary policies during the reign of James VI slowly evolved from various attempts at colonization along the lines of the policies enacted in Ireland toward a less hostile form of integration which culminated in the Regulations of 1616, mostly agreed to by both the Privy Council and the chiefs of the Western Highlands and Isles. The mode of integration which had the largest effect on the Western Highlands and Isles was the mandatory meetings between the chiefs and the Privy Council through which the chiefs were required to account for their behavior and able to acquire

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<sup>1</sup> HMC, *Report XI Appendix vi*, Mss of Duke of Hamilton, 95.

<sup>2</sup> The annual meetings were not officially mandated until the Regulations of 1616 imposed monetary consequences for non-attendance. Therefore, this thesis will use 1616 as the official start of the meetings.



licenses and appointments as government agents. These meetings effectively drew the clans of the Western Highlands and Isles out of their quasi political vacuum that facilitated their continued unrest and thrust them onto the national theatre through their role as government agents. An added benefit to the chiefs who attended these meetings was the power they were able to acquire in their capacity as government agents, essentially having their power within the region legitimized through their closer relationship with central government. However, the end of the meetings in 1629 meant that the relationship between the chiefs and central government was severed and political power could no longer be derived from central government. This loss of power from central government forced the chiefs to revert to their pre-1616 mentalities which meant a renewed focus on local politics and sources for political power. This shift away from national issues, such as the Act of Revocation, toward local issues, predominantly disputes over land tenure, effectively allowed the region to regain its autonomy.

By the outbreak of hostilities between the Covenanters and Charles I in 1639, the Western Highlands and Isles had little vested interest in the dispute; as a whole they were not affected by Charles I's Act of Revocation nor his religious innovations. The region was relatively apathetic to any changes that were happening at the centre because it had become more focused on local politics and subsequent personal agendas. Although verbal support for the king was given in 1638 by a number of clans while many others were intimidated into subscribing the National Covenant, the region did not enter the conflict for another six years. The delayed involvement of the region came to an end with the arrival of Alasdair MacColla and his Irish regiments which afforded the chiefs the opportunity to use the national crisis of the Covenant as a means to influence local politics and to carry out their personal agendas. The arrival of MacColla and the participation of the clans of the Western Highlands and Isles marked a period of royalist victories between 1644 and 1645. This study attempts to answer the question as to why the Western Highlands and Isles entered the Scottish Revolution in 1644, six years after the start of the conflict, as well as why they were involved for such a short period. In order to answer these questions the factors behind the clans' allegiances need to be determined which raises secondary questions: what were the political, religious, and



economic situations in the Western Highlands and Isles, and how did these situations influence the allegiances of the chiefs?

The time period covered in this study is roughly from the start of the annual meetings between the chiefs and the Privy Council to the aftermath of the royalists' victories; in essence the period covered is from 1616 to 1649. The beginning of the annual meetings serves as a clear starting point for an examination of the Western Highlands and Isles because it was when the region was first pulled into seventeenth century national politics and was no longer allowed to remain an autonomous entity. As this study progresses through the timeline the lapse of the annual meetings in 1629 illustrates a shift among the chiefs of the region back to local politics and autonomy, only to be drawn out again in 1644 with the arrival of Alasdair MacColla and the Western Highlands and Isles' involvement in the Scottish Revolution. The end date of 1649 has been chosen because it allows for discussion of the counter attacks of the Covenanters and the measures taken by the Committee of Estates and the Synod of Argyll against the royalists, while not delving into the Cromwellian regime which would entail an entire study in its own right. Although the period specified is 1616 to 1649 some discussions of prior history are necessary to understand the evolution of the political, religious, and economic situation in the region and to put the current topic in perspective. Therefore, some mention of the sixteenth century and a brief discussion of the Reformation are made but are intended to better an understanding of the situation at hand.

Once the timeframe has been established, a more difficult task in conducting a regional study is to actually define the geographical boundaries of the region; in this case, where the line can be drawn between the Lowlands and the Highlands and where the Western Highlands can be demarcated. The issue of a Highland Line, the dividing line between Lowlands and Highlands, has been debated by historians due to the fact that it is more of a cultural divide than a definitive geo-political line. The first and most basic thing to look at when attempting to draw the Highland Line is the topographical difference between the Highlands and Lowlands. As indicated by the name the Highlands is a primarily mountainous region with numerous large hills and glens, while the Lowlands is predominantly low rolling hills and plains.



Because of the difference of the topography between the Lowlands and Highlands two distinct societies emerged which helps to define the two regions. The hostile environment and rugged terrain of the Highlands gave rise to a subsistence based society, whereas the Lowlands were able to foster a market based society due to the ease in traveling the territory. Another basis for drawing the Highland Line is the language divide between the Highlands and Lowlands. Traditionally, the Highlands were native Gaelic speakers while the Lowlands were predominantly English or Scots speakers, with the exception of a few pockets of Gaelic speakers in the south-west and north-east. All three issues, topography, economics, and linguistics, created two starkly contrasting societies which effectively divided the kingdom in two. By analyzing the societal polarization between the Highlands and Lowlands, the Highland Line can be drawn across the southern border of Argyll east through the northern parts of Perthshire, also known as Highland Perthshire. From Highland Perthshire the Highland Line swings north at Dunkeld through Braemar running along the west of Aberdeenshire.

Having carved out the Highlands the next line to be drawn for this study is between the Highlands as a whole and the Western Highlands. For the purpose of this study the demarcation of the eastern boundary of the Western Highlands is roughly drawn south from Inverness to Dumbarton along the Druim Alban Range. This region is primarily the territory formerly under the Lordship of the Isles but also includes the Campbells' seat of Argyll. Due to the Earldoms of Sutherland and Caithness and their roles as more Lowland noble than Highland chief, as seen in their estate management and lack of Gaelic practices, these earls will be included primarily when their actions have had an impact on the clans in their districts or where they have had a definite effect on the chain of events before and during the Civil Wars, such as the troubles between Sutherland and Lord Reay, chief of MacKay. Lastly, included in this study are the numerous inner and outer islands off the western seaboard of Scotland. Again, these islands were once under the authority of the Lordship of the Isles and include among others Jura, Islay, Skye, Lewis and Barra.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> See Appendix 1-3 for maps demarcating the Highland and Western Highland boundaries.



Having defined the time period and the region an explanation of the clans selected for this study is necessary. There were roughly fifty clans who occupied the Highlands, and about half were located within the Western Highlands and Isles. Two main issues were taken into consideration when deciding which clans to include and exclude. The first deciding factor was based on the list provided by the Privy Council of chiefs who were required to attend the annual meetings. Due to the fact that the meetings were intended to consist of the most important chiefs in the Western Highlands and Isles it was decided for this study that they would constitute the majority of the clans studied because of the government's perception that they wielded the greatest influence in the region and the documentation of the clans in the *Register of the Privy Council of Scotland*. The other deciding factor was simply the availability of sources, both primary and secondary, for the various clans. Unfortunately, the shortage of sources from the Western Highlands and Isles severely reduced the number of clans which could be adequately discussed. The majority of data collected for many of the clans provided only glimpses of their history and did not allow for any in-depth analysis. As a result, only about fifteen clans are discussed in detail of which a few are clans that bordered the Western Highlands and Isles or interacted with clans in the region, such as the Clan MacKay, and are used for comparison or elaboration.

One of the primary difficulties in conducting a regional study of the Western Highlands and Isles is the shortage of archives available from the various clans in the region. For example, the papers of the Earls of Seaforth have not survived and of those clan archives that have survived few have anything of relevance to the Scottish Revolution. Of great disappointment was the Clan Donald Trust at Armadale Castle on Skye. The Clan Donald Trust is a private archive which contains a large portion of the papers of MacDonald of Sleat. Unfortunately, the collection has very few documents for the first half of the seventeenth century, only one document being of any use to this study. Likewise, the Loudoun Scottish Collection at the Huntington Library in San Marino, California showed great promise but thorough examination of the collection provided only one interesting



letter from Archibald Campbell, Marquis of Argyll,<sup>4</sup> to John Campbell, 1<sup>st</sup> Earl of Loudoun, dated 8 January 1647 in which Argyll states “I fear my condition as a curtier be in the old maner yit I pray god non wisched the king wors nor I doe and so he might be weall I should be content never to see his dominions always gods will be donne”.<sup>5</sup> It was hoped that the Loudoun Scottish Collection would compensate for the fact that access to the Campbell of Argyll Papers at Inveraray Castle is normally closed and would hopefully provide more information on the Marquis of Argyll;<sup>6</sup> however, the majority of the Loudoun Collection focuses on the Jacobite period.

The main challenge in examining the Western Highlands and Isles is the fact that there is no definitive manuscript collection which one can get immersed in, rather pieces have to be collected from various sources and pulled together to complete the puzzle. As a result, the Gifts and Deposits (GD), Parliamentary Papers (PA), and Church records (CH2) at the National Archives of Scotland had to be gleaned for any scrap of information regarding the clans during the seventeenth century. Fortunately, this proved a useful source of information and in the end yielded a large amount of primary material. The Papers of Lord Reay, the Breadalbane Muniments, and the Clanranald Papers were especially useful and provided vast amounts of detailed information on such aspects as finance and alliances. The Parliamentary Papers and Supplemental Parliamentary Papers were crucial to understanding the political dealings of the Committee of Estates and central government’s reactions to the clans of the Western Highlands and Isles and the royalists, particularly through detailed documentation of the military campaigns of Montrose and MacColla and the Covenanters’ reprisals against the same. The scarcity of Church records from the Western Highlands and Isles hindered the progress of an examination of religion in the region, only yielding one relevant

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<sup>4</sup> Archibald Campbell, 8<sup>th</sup> Earl of Argyll, became Marquis of Argyll in 1641. For continuity he will normally be referred to as Marquis of Argyll throughout this thesis.

<sup>5</sup> Huntington Library, Loudoun Scottish Collection, Letter from Marquis of Argyll to John, 1<sup>st</sup> Earl of Loudoun, Edinburgh 8 January 1647, LO8057.

<sup>6</sup> It bears mentioning that as of the summer of 2003 the archive has been opened on occasion to a few prominent historians.



presbytery record and one kirk session minute book. However, the lack of records indicated that a strong religious structure was lacking in the region.<sup>7</sup>

Although there is a shortage of relevant manuscript sources in comparison to other topics of Scottish history the availability of printed primary sources helps to fill in the gaps which could not be addressed by the manuscript sources. By concentrating on the chiefs summoned to the annual meetings with the Privy Council a large amount of information can be gathered from the *Register of the Privy Council of Scotland*.<sup>8</sup> For the purpose of this study the *Register* provided a great deal of information on conflicts between clans through both the supplications for redress from one clan against another and the lists of sureties and cautions provided by the chiefs. The *Register* also proved a good source for an examination of the economic situation of the clans by shedding considerable light on the financial status of many clans by recording the chiefs' requests for excuses from the mandatory meetings and the lists of protections from creditors granted by the Privy Council.

Just as the *Register of the Privy Council of Scotland* complements the political records contained in the Parliamentary and Supplemental Parliamentary Papers, the *Minutes of the Synod of Argyll* is an ideal companion to the Church Records.<sup>9</sup> The creation of the Synod of Argyll in 1638 meant that all religious activities within the majority of the Western Highlands and Isles were centrally controlled. As the governing body for the church in the region the scope of the Synod of Argyll's responsibilities ranged from appointments of ministers to their respective parishes to excommunications of royalists in the wake of the destructive military campaigns of Montrose and MacColla. As a result the *Minutes of the Synod of Argyll* provides the majority of religious documentation for the period 1638-61 and counter-balances the shortage of manuscripts pertaining to the state of religion in the region.

An added benefit in attempting to study the clans is the publication of specific clan archives. Due to the antiquity of many of the clan archives numerous

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<sup>7</sup> These are the Presbytery of Dunoon Records, CH2/111, and the Kingarth Kirk Session Minute Book, CH2/219 currently held at the NAS. The issue of religion is discussed in detail in Chapter 5.

<sup>8</sup> *Register of the Privy Council of Scotland*, 37 vols. (Edinburgh, 1877-).

<sup>9</sup> D.C. MacTavish (ed.), *Minutes of the Synod of Argyll, 1638-61* (Edinburgh, 1943).



individuals and societies have published large portions of various archives in order to preserve their content. Among the most prominent published collections are *The Book of Dunvegan*, *The Black Book of Taymouth*, *The Book of the Thanes of Cawdor*, and *The Lamont Papers*.<sup>10</sup> Both the *Book of Dunvegan* and *The Lamont Papers* provide considerable quantities of information on the finances of the chiefs, especially in regards to MacLeod of Dunvegan's household and legal expenses and Lamont's excessive borrowing. Again, because of the closure of the archive at Inveraray Castle, the Campbell of Glenorchy papers published in *The Black Book of Taymouth* and the Campbell of Cawdor papers published in *The Book of the Thanes of Cawdor* compensate for the lack of original documents on the Clan Campbell and have preserved numerous letters written by Archibald Campbell, Marquis of Argyll, to the heads of the cadet branches of Clan Campbell. By combining the available manuscript sources with the large amount of published material the end result in conducting a study on the Western Highlands and Isles during the Scottish Revolution is that a large amount of primary material can be found and an adequate picture can be compiled from a plethora of sources.

One obstacle in conducting research on the clans during this period is the questionable accuracy of many of the contemporary accounts and clan histories. As discussed in Martin MacGregor's article, "The Genealogical Histories of Gaelic Scotland",<sup>11</sup> many of the histories are based on oral tradition and are often written by a biased author. Some of the most prominent contemporary works were written by members of the church, such as John Spottiswoode, and clansmen, such as Hugh MacDonald of Sleat, who had motives for writing their histories either to justify their position or to re-write history in an attempt to reverse the negative effect caused by a particular person or event. Therefore, although contemporary sources, such as *The Book of Clanranald*, *A Genealogical History of the Earldom of Sutherland*, and John Spalding's *The Memoriall of the Trubles of Scotland and*

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<sup>10</sup> R. C. MacLeod (ed.), *The Book of Dunvegan: Being Documents from the Muniment Room of the MacLeods of MacLeod at Dunvegan Castle, Isle of Skye* (Edinburgh, 1939); C. Innes (ed.), *The Black Book of Taymouth: With other papers from the Breadalbane Charter Room* (1855); C. Innes (ed.), *The Book of the Thanes of Cawdor: A Series of Papers Selected from the Charter Room at Cawdor, 1236-1742* (Edinburgh, 1859); N. Lamont, of Knockdow (ed.), *An Inventory of Lamont Papers, 1231-1897* (Edinburgh, 1914).

<sup>11</sup> M. MacGregor, "The Genealogical Histories of Gaelic Scotland", in A. Fox & D. Woolf (eds.), *The Spoken Word: Oral Culture in Britain 1500-1850* (Manchester, 2002), 196-239.



*England*,<sup>12</sup> are valuable starting points for research on this topic they need to be cross-referenced and substantiated by other, more reliable sources in order to validate their historical accuracy.

Similar to the availability of primary material, the secondary literature relating specifically to this topic is limited; yet, much can be deduced by combining sources on the region with more nationally focused studies of the period. One predecessor to this study is the work done by Audrey Cunningham in 1932. Cunningham's book, *The Loyal Clans*,<sup>13</sup> attempts to explain the allegiances of the Highland clans to the Stewart monarchy and focuses a great deal on the Jacobite period and the clans of the central highlands. Although this was a valiant and pioneering undertaking, her methodology was based on two misconceptions which produced a very romanticized view of the motives behind the clans' allegiances to the crown.

Cunningham's conclusions are based on an overwhelming emphasis on the clans' belief in Divine Right and repeatedly draws correlations between chiefly power and James VI's interpretation of Divine Right, "moral claims of the highlanders to an hereditary authority of their own and to a prescriptive right to their 'kindly' possessions, were seen to harmonize with the king's theories of monarchy and with the legal principles of the strength of possession".<sup>14</sup> By using these two points, based on ideals rather than practice, as her hypothesis she echoes the romantic perception of the Highlands as propagated by Sir Walter Scott and only scratches the surface of the motives of the clans. On the surface the relationship between chiefship and Divine Right would appear a valid point, but there are numerous incidents where a clan chief was killed by members of their own clan or where branches of the clan seceded; for example, both the captain of Clanranald and Campbell of Cawdor were assassinated and the Clan Chattan confederacy fell apart under the leadership of MacIntosh resulting in clans such as the MacPhersons claiming their autonomy. Unlike James VI's Divine Right theory the chiefs were unable to act unilaterally and were held accountable by the clan elite, the loyalty

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<sup>12</sup> A. MacBain (ed.), *The Book of Clanranald* (Inverness, 1893); Sir R. Gordon of Gordonstoun, *A Genealogical History of the Earldom of Sutherland: with a continuation to the year 1651* (Edinburgh, 1813); J. Spalding, *The Memoriall of the Trubles of Scotland and England* 2vols. (Aberdeen, 1792).

<sup>13</sup> A. Cunningham, *The Loyal Clans* (Cambridge, 1932).

<sup>14</sup> A. Cunningham, *Loyal Clans*, 222.



which Cunningham's equates with their support of Divine Right is a tenuous position on which to make her point because the clans are not seen as using the theory in action.

The other misconception which *The Loyal Clans* is based on is the incompatibility between the traditional clan system and feudalism. Robert Dodgshon's work on the structure of the clan system indirectly refutes Cunningham's point.<sup>15</sup> Although the imposition of feudalism did create difficulties for the management of resources, such as the distribution of food and the allocation of manpower, Dodgshon explains that the clan system was flexible enough to adjust to changes in land tenure and that the structure of the clan was clearly able to coexist with the demands of feudalism. One valid point that Cunningham did make was the power of the feudal superior which had the potential for creating conflict, especially in regards to the Campbells of Argyll. The desire of the clans of the Western Highlands and Isles to overthrow Argyll as their feudal superior was a major contributor to their involvement in the royalist campaign. Unfortunately, Cunningham's discussion of the Western Highlands and Isles' position on the eve of the Covenant is devoid of any detailed discussion of the individual clans' situation and relation to Argyll. Where one would expect a lengthy discussion regarding the political, religious, and economic status of specific clans there is a two page overview which glosses over the motives of the clans in favor of her romanticized loyalty to the Stewart monarchy. Although Cunningham's conclusions are faulty, the questions she posed on the subject of allegiances were ground-breaking and provided a framework on which to formulate the questions asked in this thesis.

A more helpful secondary source in conducting this study was the work by Donald Gregory in 1836 which provides a less biased comprehensive study specifically on the Western Highlands and Isles.<sup>16</sup> His work is the most complete study of its kind thus far, but unfortunately he ends his investigation with the death of James VI in 1625. As a result his work provides a great deal of information and insight into the Highland policies of James VI and the overall position of the clans

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<sup>15</sup> R. Dodgshon, *From Chiefs to Landlords: social and economic change in the Western Highlands and Islands, c.1493-1820* (Edinburgh, 1998), chapters 2&3.

<sup>16</sup> D. Gregory, *History of the Western Highlands and Isles of Scotland, from A.D. 1493 to A.D. 1625* (Edinburgh, 1836).



on the eve of Charles I's succession. Gregory's extensive research details the attempts to colonize the region as conducted by the Fife Adventures in Lewis, the restrictions on Campbell of Cawdor's grant to Islay limiting who was allowed to be on the land, and the numerous grants and commissions issued to Argyll, all points which culminated in a great deal of discontent among the local clans by the outbreak of the war. By using Gregory's work as a basic model for a regional study of the Western Highlands and Isles and as a foundation to expand such a study into the reign of Charles I it is hoped that this research will not just enhance our understanding of the allegiances of the clans in the region but provides for a better understanding of the region in general.

Although Donald Gregory's work is the only comprehensive research conducted on the Western Highlands and Isles, there are some notable contributions which help to reveal the complexities of the region. One of the greatest contributions to our knowledge of the Highlands and to a degree the Western Highlands is Allan Macinnes's *Clanship, Commerce and the House of Stuart, 1603-1788*.<sup>17</sup> Prof. Macinnes provides us with the most complete view of the Highlands during this time period as well as a detailed explanation of the structure of the clan system which is a vital tool in attempting to decipher the hierarchy of the clans and how power was distributed among the clansmen. Although Macinnes looks at the entire Highland region he does commit large portions of his research specifically to the Western Highlands and Isles and is able to advance our understanding of the dynamics of the region through his remarkable access to the Argyll Papers at Inveraray Castle.

While Macinnes provides an excellent overall study of the Highlands two studies on the social and economic situation of the Western Highlands and Isles merit mentioning. The first study of note is Frances Shaw's *The Northern and Western Islands of Scotland: Their Economy and Society in the Seventeenth Century*.<sup>18</sup> Dr. Shaw's work focuses more on the history of Orkney and Shetland than on the Western Isles, but her investigation into the financial positions of the clan chiefs during this period provided a great resource from which to conduct a

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<sup>17</sup> A. Macinnes, *Clanship, Commerce and the House of Stuart, 1603-1788* (East Linton, 1996).

<sup>18</sup> F. Shaw, *The Northern and Western Islands of Scotland: Their Economy and Society in the Seventeenth Century* (Edinburgh, 1980).



more detailed analysis of the level of indebtedness in the region. Furthermore, her analysis of the Bishop of the Isles' report to James VI on the state of his diocese imparts a useful summary of the state of religion in the area. The other significant contributor to the study of economics and society is by geographer Robert Dodgshon who takes an anthropological look at the dynamics of the Western Highlands and Isles between 1493 and 1820. Prof. Dodgshon's research focuses first on the structure of the clan system and the distribution of power, similar to the approach taken by Prof. Macinnes. In his book, *From Chiefs to Landlords: social and economic change in the Western Highlands and Islands, c.1493-1820*,<sup>19</sup> he conducts a complex analysis of the transformation of the clans from a agriculturally based economy to a cash driven economy and the effects this change had on the distribution of authority within the clans and the region as a whole.

The significant research on the annual meetings between the chiefs of the Western Highlands and Isles and the Privy Council by Dr. Jean Munro was essential to the chapters within this study on the politics and economics of the region. As the advent of the annual meetings has been relatively neglected, a thorough investigation of this innovative Highland policy is found in Dr. Munro's article, "When Island Chiefs came to Town".<sup>20</sup> Dr. Munro's article provides vital details of the annual meetings including the means used to summon chiefs, lists of the chiefs included, and the amounts of cautions and sureties charged to the chiefs. Through Dr. Munro's thorough research the foundation is laid for a more detailed study of the impact of these meetings both politically and economically.

The overwhelming bulk of Scottish historical literature poses a significant problem when attempting to conduct a regional study of the Western Highlands and Isles during the reign of Charles I; either the studies include the Western Highlands and Isles but cover a different time period or they cover the right time period but do not address the region. As a result the political and religious research done on the Western Highlands and Isles seldom stretches to the 1630s and 1640s due to the political dominance of the Lowlands inherent in their closer relationship to central

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<sup>19</sup> R. Dodgshon, *From Chiefs to Landlords: social and economic change in the Western Highlands and Islands, c.1493-1820* (Edinburgh, 1998).

<sup>20</sup> J. Munro, "When Island Chiefs came to Town" in *Notes & Queries: Society of West Highland and Island Historical Research* XIX (Dec. 1982), 11-19.



government and involvement in the Covenant Movement. For example, Robert Black's article "Colla Ciotach" and the series of articles on the Clan Campbell by Edward J. Cowan focus on the local politics and particular events in the history of the Western Highlands and Isles but they deal primarily with events during the reign of James VI.<sup>21</sup> Although these studies are essential to understanding the local politics of the region and provide the foundation for an analysis on the formation of allegiances during the Scottish Revolution to be traced back to long standing alliances and rivalries they offer little discussion of subsequent developments in the region.

Two notable exception to this are Edward J. Cowan's article on Archibald Campbell, Marquis of Argyll, in which he discusses the ideology and politics of the marquis during the Covenant Movement and *Montrose: For Covenant and King* which details Montrose's career as both a Covenanter and later a Royalist.<sup>22</sup> Both works provide a great deal of information and insight into the careers and philosophies of both Argyll and Montrose whom had once been on the same side and later opposed each other on the field of battle. In *Montrose: For Covenant and King* Cowan's focus is on Montrose himself, but at the high point of his career Montrose mobilized many of the clans of the Western Highlands and Isles that are the subject of this thesis. The manner in which Cowan addresses the shift in Montrose's allegiance from the Covenanters to the Royalists and the apprehensions Montrose had in relation to the direction the Covenant regime was taking under the leadership of Argyll enabled the shifts in allegiances of the clans to be better understood. Cowan makes it clear that opposition to the Covenant regime was not necessarily a rejection of the National Covenant but the manner in which it was being enforced. In looking at Montrose's career, Cowan's central chapters provide a detailed narrative of Montrose's military exploits for the Royalists' army, resulting in providing additional details of the clans who joined him.

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<sup>21</sup> R. Black, "Colla Ciotach", *TGSI*, 48 (1976), 201-43; E.J. Cowan, "The Angus Campbells and the Origin of the Campbell-Ogilvie Feud", *Scottish Studies*, 25 (1981), 25-38; E.J. Cowan, "Fishers in Drumlíe Waters: Clanship and Campbell Expansion in the Time of Gilleasbuig Gruamach", *TGSI*, 54 (1987), 269-312; E.J. Cowan, "Clanship, Kinship and the Campbell Acquisition of Islay", *SHR*, 58 (1979), 132-57.

<sup>22</sup> E.J. Cowan, "The Political Ideas of a Covenanting Leader: Archibald Campbell, marquis of Argyll, 1607-61", in R. A. Mason (ed.), *Scots and Britons: Scottish Political Thought and the Union of 1603* (Cambridge, 1994); E.J. Cowan, *Montrose: For Covenant and King* (London, 1977).



The companion to Cowan's work on Montrose is his analysis of the political and philosophical ideals of the Marquis of Argyll. When Cowan's article, "The Political Ideas of a Covenanting Leader: Archibald Campbell, marquis of Argyll, 1607-61", is placed alongside *Montrose: For Covenant and King* the increasing animosity during the Civil Wars can be seen as not only a confrontation between Royalists and Covenanters but also a result of the division within the Covenanting ranks between radicals and conservatives. Cowan's article on Argyll analyzed a series of letters between Argyll and the Earl of Strafford during the period in which the earl was Lord Deputy of Ireland. Cowan illustrates that a great deal of Argyll's rebuttals to Strafford were echoes of earlier philosophers and theologians both in Britain and on the continent. The most notable aspect of this article is that Argyll rarely put his thoughts in writing and the discovery of these letters by Cowan allows for a deeper insight in the mind of one of the most radical Covenanters. Finally, it must be noted that Cowan's access to the Argyll archives at Inveraray Castle proves invaluable to this thesis due to the present closure of the archives. Cowan's use of the Argyll archives provides a vast amount of indirect research material and his biographical studies provide a great deal of ideas and perspectives from which to work with and expand upon.

In looking at the secondary literature on religion a great deal of work has been conducted by Jane Dawson and James Kirk. Both Dawson and Kirk focus primarily on the state of religion in the Western Highlands and Isles during the Reformation era and the Jacobean church.<sup>23</sup> Although Dawson has published articles which do extend into the period covered in this thesis,<sup>24</sup> the main focus of her research is on the 5<sup>th</sup> Earl of Argyll and his relationship with the Church of Scotland and Bishop John Carswell. Dr. Dawson argues that the Reformation was a

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<sup>23</sup> J. Dawson, "The Origins of the 'Road to the Isles': Trade, Communications and Campbell Power in Early Modern Scotland", in R. Mason and N. Macdougall (eds.), *People and Power in Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1992); J. Dawson, "Clan, Kin and Kirk: the Campbells and the Scottish Reformation", in N.S. Amos *et al.* (eds.), *The Education of a Christian Society: Humanism and the Reformation in Britain and the Netherlands* (Aldershot, 1999); J. Kirk, "The Kirk and the Highlands at the Reformation", *Northern Scotland*, 7 (1986), 1-22; J. Kirk, "The Jacobean Church in the Highlands, 1567-1625", in L. MacLean (ed.), *The Seventeenth Century in the Highlands* (Inverness Field Club, 1986).

<sup>24</sup> Of great significance are J. Dawson, "The Gaidhealtachd and the emergence of the Scottish Highlands", in B. Bradshaw and P. Roberts (eds.), *British Consciousness and Identity: The making of Britain, 1533-1707* (Cambridge, 1998); J. Dawson, "Calvinism and the Gaidhealtach in Scotland", in A. Pettegree *et al.* (eds.), *Calvinism in Europe, 1560-1620* (Cambridge, 1994).



success in the Western Highlands and Isles and that the Protestant religion had a strong foundation in the region thanks primarily to the earls of Argyll. This argument is continued by James Kirk in his work on the Jacobean church in the Highlands; however, Kirk does concede the counterargument that although the church was present this does not void the point that the locals could simply ignore the church.<sup>25</sup> The work done by Dawson and Kirk provides a backdrop on which to compare and contrast the state of religion during the reign of James VI and Charles I that highlights the fact that there was a definite shift in religious fervor which manifested itself into a blatant lack of religious structure in the Western Highlands and Isles by the 1630s.

Similar to the secondary sources that cover the Western Highlands and Isles but during earlier time periods, the vast quantity of commentary on the politics, economics, and religion which does focus on the first half of the seventeenth century but looks primarily at the Lowlands proposes useful theories and models on which to compare and contrast the Western Highlands and Isles. These “national” studies, which center on events in Edinburgh, often are useful in understanding the broader context into which the region fits. A prime example of this is the enormous contribution made by Prof. David Stevenson through his plethora of studies on the Covenant Movement.<sup>26</sup> Although Prof. Stevenson focuses on events at the national level, thus primarily the situations in Edinburgh and Aberdeen, his work allows for regional studies to be conducted within the framework of his research and in numerous incidences Stevenson highlights where these studies can be inserted. Stevenson even wrote a quasi-regional study through his study of the life and career of Alasdair MacColla in his book entitled *Highland Warrior: Alasdair MacColla and the Civil Wars*.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> In his article, “The Kirk and the Highlands at the Reformation”, Kirk concludes his article by claiming that although the kirk had a presence in the region “There was ample opportunity, therefore, even in more settled times, for parishioners in remoter communities—and even in not so remote communities—to avoid all contact with the kirk”, p.19.

<sup>26</sup> D. Stevenson, *King or Covenant? Voices from Civil War* (East Linton, 1996); D. Stevenson, *The Scottish Revolution 1637-44: The Triumph of the Covenanters* (Newton Abbot, 1973); D. Stevenson, *Revolution and Counter Revolution in Scotland, 1644-51* (London, 1977); D. Stevenson, *Scottish Covenanters and Irish Confederates* (Belfast, 1981).

<sup>27</sup> D. Stevenson, *Highland Warrior: Alasdair MacColla and the Civil Wars* (Edinburgh, 2003).



While “national” studies are significant for the framework they provide so too are the studies specifically relating to the economics and religion of the seventeenth century. General economic and religious histories of this period are useful due to their commentary on and discussion of national patterns which can be applied to a specific region. In this case, the analysis of aristocratic finances and debt by Keith Brown provides several models for accruing debt and discusses the levels of indebtedness among Lowland nobles.<sup>28</sup> The models and discussions offered up by Prof. Brown were beneficial to an understanding of the functioning of the debt market and the ease with which the chiefs could borrow funds. As will be seen in chapter seven, although Prof. Brown and I find similar patterns of indebtedness our conclusions on the effect this had on allegiance differ due to the inherent differences between the Lowlands and Highlands and the external forces which are found in the specific regions. Discussions on the state of religion in the sixteenth and seventeenth century by Margo Todd and Michael Lynch also provided models on which to apply the details of the Western Highlands and Isles.<sup>29</sup> Margo Todd’s work on *The Culture of Protestantism in Early Modern Scotland* provides a generalized view of religion during the period which does not appear to allow for the uniqueness of the state of religion, or lack thereof, in the Western Highlands and Isles. However, a more significant correlation between the discussion of religion on a national level and on a regional level was found in Prof. Lynch’s discussion of “Calvinism in Scotland, 1559-1638” where he states that “The result was that in many respects the progress of the Reformed Church after 1560 depended on a series of local reformations, each moving at its own pace and with its own distinctive problems to surmount.”<sup>30</sup> This statement allowed for an in-depth discussion of religion in the Western Highlands and Isles by proposing the idea that every locality differed in its religious affirmation and highlighted that the Reformed Church had obstacles to overcome which were indigenous to the various regions of Scotland.

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<sup>28</sup> K. Brown, “Aristocratic Finances and the Origins of the Scottish Revolution”, *English Historical Review*, 104 (1989), 46-87; K. Brown, *Noble Society in Scotland* (Edinburgh, 2000).

<sup>29</sup> M. Todd, *The Culture of Protestantism in Early Modern Scotland* (New Haven, 2002); M. Lynch, “Calvinism in Scotland, 1559-1638”, in M. Prestwich (ed.), *International Calvinism, 1541-1715* (Oxford, 1985); M. Lynch, *Scotland: A New History* (London, 1992), 115-55.

<sup>30</sup> M. Lynch, “Calvinism in Scotland, 1559-1638”, 229.



When trying to understand the intricacies of the Western Highlands and Isles sometimes the theories and models within Scottish commentaries do not adequately explain the situation. On many occasions research on England, Ireland and Wales proved more beneficial, if not to provide actual models than to at least help facilitate an understanding of the possible variant models. The inclusion of the other three countries were primarily used to provide possible modes with which the Scottish government attempted to incorporate the chiefs of the Western Highlands and Isles as well as the clans' reaction seen through their allegiances during the conflict. The history of Wales served as a prime example of Michael Braddick's definition of state formation through integration and the transformation of local elites into government agents.<sup>31</sup> One of the most definitive works on Wales during the Tudor and Stuart periods was written by Glanmor Williams in which he charted the process of the union between Wales and England in *Renewal and Reformation: Wales, c.1415-1642*.<sup>32</sup> The addition of Peter Roberts's work specifically on the Act of Union and the "language clause" allowed for specific correlations to be drawn between the policies imposed on Wales and on the Western Highlands and Isles.<sup>33</sup> Similarly the history of Ireland provided evidence of internal colonization through the plantation schemes in Ulster and Munster as theorized by Michael Hechter.<sup>34</sup> R.F. Foster's *Modern Ireland, 1600-1972* and Nicholas Canny's *Making Ireland British, 1580-1650* both give extensive details of the political relationship between central government and the Irish elites and the process of colonization through plantation.<sup>35</sup> By comparing and contrasting the events in Wales and Ireland to the Western Highlands and Isles, the Highland policies of James VI and Charles I can be placed within a British context and the region's position within the kingdom can be determined.

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<sup>31</sup> M. Braddick, *State Formation in Early Modern England, c.1550-1700* (Cambridge, 2000).

<sup>32</sup> G. Williams, *Renewal and Reformation Wales, c.1415-1642* (Oxford, 1993).

<sup>33</sup> Roberts, P., "The 'Act of Union' in Welsh History", *Transactions of the Honourable Society of Cymmrodorion* (London, 1974), 49-72; Roberts, P., "The Welsh Language, English Law and Tudor Legislation", *Transactions of the Honourable Society of Cymmrodorion* (London, 1989), 19-75.

<sup>34</sup> M. Hechter, *Internal Colonialism: The Celtic Fringe in British National Development*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (New Brunswick, 1999).

<sup>35</sup> R.F. Foster, *Modern Ireland, 1600-1972* (London, 1988); N. Canny, *Making Ireland British, 1580-1650* (Oxford, 2001).



The history of England during the Wars of the Three Kingdoms likewise provided evidence which could be compared and contrasted to events in the Western Highlands and Isles, especially on the issue of allegiances. Due to the fact that relatively little has been written on models of allegiance within Scotland, the research on allegiances within English counties conducted by John Morrill helped to compensate for the lack of Scottish evidence. Prof. Morrill's research offered the closest comparison for studying allegiances within the Western Highlands and Isles and provided a clear framework for understanding the underlying motives of those involved in the Civil Wars.<sup>36</sup>

Due to the nature of the research questions contained in this study the most coherent structure is to divide the thesis into six thematic chapters: historical context, theoretical models of nation building, politics, religion, economics, and allegiance. By structuring the research in a thematic format the political, religious, and economic situations can be isolated in order to determine their effect on the allegiances of the Western Highlands and Isles. The inclusion of a historical context chapter and a theoretical chapter enables the various circumstances to be placed within a broader context.

In order to begin a comprehensive work on the Western Highlands and Isles an understanding of the historical framework is needed. Therefore, chapter two, "The Western Highlands and Isles in Context", focuses on the general history of the Western Highlands and Isles during the reigns of James VI and Charles I. This chapter pays particular attention to the position of clans during the reign of James VI and Charles I. Also contained in this chapter is an overview of the Scottish Revolution which examines the conflict from a national perspective and lays the foundation for more detailed research to be conducted which focuses on the involvement of the Western Highlands and Isles. In general, chapter two allows the region to be placed in a broader Scottish context and forms the foundation for the following chapters which detail the particular situations relevant to the development of allegiances in the Western Highlands and Isles.

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<sup>36</sup> J. Morrill, *The Nature of the English Revolution* (London, 1993); J. Morrill, *Cheshire, 1630-1660: county government and society during the English Revolution* (London, 1974); J. Morrill, *Revolt in the provinces: the people of England and the tragedies of war, 1630-1648*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (London, 1999).



Chapter three, “The Western Highlands and Isles’ Place in the British Kingdom: Colonialism or State Formation?”, looks at the theoretical models of internal colonialism and state formation. Through an examination of the policies directed toward Ireland and Wales, the numerous and diverse Highland policies can be put in context. This furthers the analysis of issues related to the formation of allegiances in the Western Highlands and Isles. Using Ireland as a model for internal colonialism through the plantation schemes and Wales as an example of state formation through integration, direct correlations can be drawn to policies employed in the Highlands. By conducting this type of comparative investigation the relevance of the theoretical models to the developments in the Western Highlands and Isles can be determined.

Chapter four, “Central Government and the Western Highlands and Isles”, focuses on the political relationship between central government and the Western Highlands and Isles. The main emphasis of this chapter is the development and later breakdown of a closer connection between the government in Edinburgh and the chiefs of the Western Highlands and Isles. It will be argued that the annual meetings between the clan chiefs and the Privy Council were the primary link between the two entities. The most important aspect of this chapter is the effect that the end of the meetings had on the relationship between the clan chiefs and government and how the lapse allowed the chiefs to shift their attention away from national issues back to local affairs. To illustrate this point, an analysis of the increase in land disputes between chiefs and the difficulty faced by central government, primarily the Committee of Estates, when attempting to enforce national committees and commissions will be conducted. By tracing the shifts from autonomy prior to the meetings, to cooperation with central government during the meetings, and back to autonomy with the collapse of the meetings, the rise in personal agendas and a renewed struggle for local political dominance can be seen which would later play a large role in the allegiances of the clans in the Western Highlands and Isles.

Chapter five, “Religion from Reformation to War”, analyzes the state of religion in the Western Highlands and Isles. By the outbreak of the Civil Wars, the Western Highlands and Isles could not be clearly labeled Protestant or Catholic. This chapter looks at the difficulties faced by the Church of Scotland in trying to



establish a strong religious foundation in the region, and its attempts to overcome the remoteness of the region as well as the inherent differences between Lowland clergy and the Gaelic culture. Particular emphasis will be placed on the inability of the Church of Scotland to breach the Gaelic language barrier that hindered the spread of the Protestant faith and severely limited the number of adequate ministers appointed to predominantly Gaelic parishes. Another obstacle faced by the Kirk was the geographical isolation of many of the parishes; it will be seen that the vastness of the region created numerous problems for accessibility and attendance at the parishes. To illustrate the fact that the region lacked a strong religious foundation, whether Protestant or Catholic, an analysis of the limitations of the Irish Franciscan Missions will also be conducted and will include discussion of the actions of Catholics, especially their outward conformity.

The last factor behind the development of allegiances, economics, is addressed in chapter six, "Indebtedness in the Western Highlands and Isles". This chapter examines the issue of the increasing indebtedness among the chiefs in the Western Highlands and Isles. Due to the complexities of this chapter, it is divided into two parts. The first half of the chapter provides an explanation of the sources of financial difficulties and the mechanisms of the newly formed debt market. It will be seen that a great deal of the financial difficulties experienced by the chiefs relate to the annual meetings with the Privy Council. The cautions and sureties, legal fees, traveling expenses, and conspicuous consumption while in Edinburgh, dramatically increased the financial burden of many of the chiefs. When these factors are combined with the expenses of the Civil Wars and the loss of rents due to the devastation of the royalist victories the end result was near financial ruin for some chiefs. The increase of indebtedness among the chiefs forced many into the debt market found within the Lowlands and slowly extended the market into the Western Highlands and Isles. The first half of this chapter will conclude with a discussion of the procedures of acquiring debt and of collecting on outstanding debts, such as obligations, wadsets and apprisings. The second half of the chapter consists of three case studies to illustrate the processes of acquiring debts and attempts to prevent utter financial ruin. Through the financial accounting of the Captain of Clanranald, Clan Lamont, and the Campbells of Glenorchy the various reasons for indebtedness,



especially the costs of lawlessness, military recruiting and territorial devastation during the Civil Wars, and the financial ramifications of insolvency are represented.

Once the political, religious, and economic factors are determined, chapter seven, “Western Highlands and Isles Allegiances”, explains how these issues affected allegiances in the region. Specific examples are given showing how various clans were affected by one or more factors. In order to fully understand how the political, religious, and economic situations affected the clans, motives, such as self-advancement and self-preservation, are discussed. It is argued that the overwhelming reason for the region’s involvement in the Scottish Revolution was the effect that the clans’ involvement, as well as the outcome of the war, would have on local politics and that involvement was based on personal agendas rather than for the “traditional” platforms of the Covenanters and royalists.

Chapter eight, the conclusion, discusses the importance regional studies and allegiance formation have on the history of the Civil Wars, and concludes with a brief discussion of the region’s involvement in subsequent Highland Risings, such as Glencairn’s Rising and the Jacobite Risings. By highlighting the findings of this study and how they culminated in the temporary involvement of the Western Highlands and Isles in the Civil Wars, it is intended that the uniqueness of the region’s involvement and motives are made clear.

## Chapter 2

### The Western Highlands and Isles in Context

“The Scottish business is extreme ill indeed, and what will become of it God knows, but certainly no good, and his majesty hath been notoriously betrayed by some of them.”

*Letter from Archbishop Laud to Viscount Wentworth, 20<sup>th</sup> July 1638*<sup>1</sup>

To fully understand the role of the Western Highlands and Isles in the struggle between Covenanters and Royalists particular events and key issues need to be highlighted, especially those which separated the region from other areas of Scotland. It is essential to include an overview of the situation in the Western Highlands and Isles in order to lay the foundation for the following chapters which detail specific aspects, such as politics, religion and economics. Due to the plethora of studies available which detail the royalist campaign of James Graham, Marquis of Montrose, and Alasdair MacColla, the following discussions will not address the specific battles; rather the focus will be on the impact that the arrival of MacColla and his Irish regiments had on the sequence of events. Although “the Scottish business [was] extreme ill indeed” the stance of the Western Highlands and Isles formed the strongest contingent of royalist support between 1637 and 1650. As will be seen in this overview of events in the Western Highlands and Isles, the actions of James VI and Charles I laid the foundation for the rising of the MacDonalds in both Ireland and Scotland which resulted in the temporary period of royalist supremacy in the mid 1640s under the leadership of Ranald MacDonnell, 2<sup>nd</sup> Earl of Antrim, Alasdair MacColla, and James Graham, Marquis of Montrose.

## I

The structure of the Highland clan system was a complex hierarchy involving every level of Highland society with each individual providing an essential role in the functioning of the clan. As head of the kindred, the chief acted as the patriarch of the clan, but, like the Stuart monarchs, was restricted in his

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<sup>1</sup> J.H. Parker (ed.), *The Works of the Most Reverend Father in God William Laud, D.D.* 7 vol. (New York, 1975), VI, pt. i, 531.



actions which prevented him from acting as a despot. Although in theory the monarch was answerable only to God, in practice he was required to consult parliament — a point incomprehensible for Charles I. Similar to the relationship between king and council, the chief was the head of the clan elite and was therefore answerable to his own council. The power of the chief was derived from the loyalty and service of their subordinates in return for the chiefs practicing “good lordship”, meaning acting in the best interest of the kin-group. This relationship was emphasized through the frequent use of “we”, indicating the corporate body of which the chief was head. Although the chief of his clan, one could not unilaterally impose a particular line of policy, Highland chiefs were answerable to their kin-group and were expected to lead but not command. The clan elites, especially the tacksmen, were consulted by their chief on policy making and their consent was essential to the functioning of the kin-group because the tacksmen were the ones able to mobilize the whole clan and its resources. Therefore, the chiefs and the clan elites had to work together.

Just as the monarch was to provide for and protect his subjects, the chief, as trustee of the clan, was responsible for providing protection for his clansmen, which entailed not only protection from attacks by neighboring clans but also protection from other issues such as food shortages and injustice. The relationship between chief and clansman was addressed by the MacLean bard, Iain Lom, when he claimed that the chief was ordained by God as a “peacemaker”, “who should protect us with vigour, and to whom we ought to submit as long as we live”.<sup>2</sup> A more complete analysis of the chiefs’ role within the clan system is provided by John Leslie, Bishop of Ross, who stated that:

It was the custom in the Yrishe country to acknowledge ane principall for thair cheif capitane, to quhome they are obedient, tyme of wear and peace, for he is mediatour betwixt theame and the prince, he defendis thame aganis the invasionis of thair enemies, thair nychboures, and he causis mynistir justice to thame all in the maner of the country, sua that none suld be suffered to maik spoile or go in sorning, as they call it, or as vagabondes in the cuntrey.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> As quoted in Macinnes, *Clanship, Commerce and the House of Stuart*, 3.

<sup>3</sup> As quoted in E. Cowan, “The Discovery of the Gaidhealtachd in Sixteenth Century Scotland”, *TGSI*, 60 (1998), 259-84, at p. 273-4.



The relationship between chief and the idea of “good lordship” not only supported the chief’s position within his clan but allowed the clan to expand by incorporating those lesser families in need of assistance. As Prof. Allan Macinnes states, “The clan, literally the children, as a political, social and cultural entity was the collective product of feudalism, kinship and local association”.<sup>4</sup>

The clan system combined these factors through the use of bonds and tacks which served to strengthen and expand the clan’s power over the region, as well as through marriage and the practice of fosterage. Bonds of manrent and friendship established a complex network of alliances between families and chiefs and chiefs with others of their similar status. Bonds of manrent were contracts between a lesser family and their local chief. Families who wanted the protection that would be afforded to them through association with a clan would approach the chief and offer a bond. These bonds often detailed the family’s promise to serve the chief for life including giving counsel, accompanying him when required, and averting harm to the chief.<sup>5</sup> In return the chief gave his promise to protect the family as his own kinsmen. A prime example of a bond of manrent was a contract entered into between Simon Fraser, Lord Lovat, and John Chisholm of Comer. On 13 March 1621 Chisholm of Comer, as the lower ranked chief, obliged himself to attend Lord Fraser’s court and committed his clan to the service of the Frasers of Lovat.<sup>6</sup> This bond expanded Fraser of Lovat’s power and status while at the same time provided protection to Chisholm of Comer from attacks on his person or property. As Jenny Wormald states, the alliances these bonds created were “the most effective method of complementing and adding to the kin-group, and imposing on those who were not of the lord’s kin the obligations which bound those that were.”<sup>7</sup>

Similarly, the use of bonds of friendship linked clans and families of the same status with the obligation that they would behave towards each other as if they were kin, thus ensuring “good neighborhood” and creating a network of alliances.<sup>8</sup> During the “Scottish troubles” the use of bonds of friendship served to preserve the

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<sup>4</sup> Macinnes, *Clanship, Commerce and the House of Stuart*, 1.

<sup>5</sup> J. Wormald, *Lords and Men in Scotland: Bonds of Manrent, 1442-1603* (Edinburgh, 1985), 2.

<sup>6</sup> J. Munro, ed., *Inventory of Chisholm Writs 1456-1810*, New Series 18 (Scottish Record Society, 1992), 17.

<sup>7</sup> Wormald, *Lords and Men*, 76.

<sup>8</sup> Macinnes, *Clanship, Commerce and the House of Stuart*, 10.



peace between clans and reinforce their alliance. In June 1639 Sir Donald MacKay, Lord Reay, entered into a bond with George MacKenzie, Earl of Seaforth, “that our friendship under God and our sovereign lord the King’s Majesty may very much conduce to the particular weal and standing of either our houses and families, and to the good of all our friends, vassals, and tenants”.<sup>9</sup> In some cases, bonds of friendship were used to end a dispute between two clans to bring about the sense of a “good neighborhood”. In an attempt to halt the animosity between the MacLeods of Dunvegan and the MacDonalds of Sleat bonds of friendship were entered into by Rory Mor MacLeod of Dunvegan and Donald Gorme MacDonald of Sleat in 1601 and 1609.<sup>10</sup>

The use of marriage contracts served a slightly different purpose in the structuring of alliance networks. Whereas bonds of manrent and friendship connected two clans who were to behave as if they were kin the use of marriages created an extended family with an actual kin relation being formed. In many situations the alliance created by a marriage contract was just as important as the financial benefits to either the bride or groom’s clans. A prime example of a marriage contract that involved a large financial transaction was the contract between John MacDonald of Moidart, Captain of Clanranald, and Marion, daughter of Sir Rory Mor MacLeod of Dunvegan. In 1613 Clanranald received from MacLeod 200 cows and a galley of 24 oars and three sails,<sup>11</sup> which helped to bolster Clanranald’s assets at a time when he was just starting to feel the financial consequences of his clan’s turbulent behavior.<sup>12</sup> The alliance between Clanranald and MacLeod remained steadfast throughout the 1610s and 1620s; in one instance MacLeod, in his capacity as father-in-law, was able to acquire for Clanranald an excuse from the obligation of attending the annual meetings with the Privy Council on the grounds of Clanranald’s debt.<sup>13</sup>

Whereas marriage contracts were often used to extend families the use of fosterage was more often used to strengthen existing ties within a clan. Foster

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<sup>9</sup> A. Mackay, ed., *The Book of Mackay* (Edinburgh, 1906), 431-3.

<sup>10</sup> R.C. MacLeod, ed., *The Book of Dunvegan: Being Documents from the Muniment Room of the MacLeods of MacLeod at Dunvegan Castle* (Spalding Club, 1939), 46.

<sup>11</sup> *The Book of Dunvegan*, 52-4.

<sup>12</sup> For details of Clanranald’s financial situation see chapter 6, “Indebtedness in the Western Highlands and Isles”.

<sup>13</sup> NLS, MSS 2133, Letter from MacLeod of Dunvegan to James VI, 1622.



parents were members of the lower strata within the clan who were selected to care for one of the sons of a higher ranking member of the clan which included providing room and board and ensuring the foster child's education. Often the chief's sons were brought up within the household of one of the clan gentry who would in turn delegate the care of his sons to a member of the lesser gentry. As a result, it was a great honor and privilege to be a foster parent as it increased the parents' status within the clan, but of greater importance was the strengthening of the hierarchical relationship between the chief, clan elites, and lesser gentry.

The practice of fosterage was viewed by central government as one of the primary problems of the clan system due to the perpetuation of the Gaelic language and the strength of the alliances that fosterage created. To both weaken the strength of the clans and to instill Lowland values in the Highlands, central government began a direct attack on the traditional practice as early as 1609. One of the statutes included in the Statutes of Iona in 1609 was the stipulation that the eldest son of the chief was to be educated in Lowland or continental schools. This statute was repeated in the conference held with the island chiefs in 1610 and ordered again in the 1616 regulations with the addition that the chief's heir would not be allowed to inherit the chiefship unless they were educated in the Lowlands. Central government's position against fosterage was intended to break down the clan system by attacking its hierarchical structure, as well as the indigenous Gaelic language, both of which were thought to be sources of the Highland problem.<sup>14</sup>

One clan which continued the tradition of fosterage was the Clan Campbell. The Campbells were particularly adept at utilizing fosterage to both strengthen the connection between different branches of the clan as well as enhancing ties with neighboring clans. Within the Clan Campbell it appears that fosterage of the Marquis of Argyll's sons continued as late as 1647. Between 1633 and 1637 it is recorded that Sir Colin Campbell of Glenorchy was responsible for the education of Archibald, later 9<sup>th</sup> Earl of Argyll, while Sir Donald Campbell of Ardnamurchan was prepared to be foster parent to Archibald's brother, Neil. A letter from Argyll to John Campbell, Earl of Loudoun, as late as January 1647 concludes with Argyll referring to his son being in Loudoun's care, "direct my sonne as your Lo[rds]hip

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<sup>14</sup> For discussion of Highland policies between 1609 and 1616 see below, p.35-7.



thinks fit and command me as your Lo[rds]hip's] cousin and servant".<sup>15</sup> Not only did Argyll send his sons to be foster but he also had taken in Ewen Cameron, who would later turn against the Clan Campbell and lead his clan in the numerous Jacobite movements. In 1641 Ewen Cameron of Lochiel was placed under the charge of Argyll. It appears to have been Argyll's intention to gain the support of the Clan Cameron and groom the young Ewen to be an ardent supporter of Argyll's philosophies. However, after viewing the atrocities carried out after the battle of Philiphaugh Ewen conspired with his kinsmen to leave Argyll's charge and returned home in 1647.<sup>16</sup> Although central government was opposed to the practice of fosterage, even as a high ranking official within the Covenanting government Argyll continued without facing any consequences from the courts. Argyll's fosterage served as a key component in maintaining the integrity of his clan while it was recovering from Royalist attacks by preserving the relationship between the various branches of the clan while at the same time maintaining a hold on one of his allies through the fosterage of Ewen Cameron.

The expansion of the clan through the numerous types of bonds created a clear hierarchy of power which placed the chief at the head of the kindred, followed by the clan elites, the tacksmen, and, lastly, the tenants. The most vital link on the chain of clan power was the tacksmen. By the seventeenth century the chief held his territory primarily through crown charter, and in turn gave a tack, an oral or written lease, to a member of the lesser gentry within his clan. As a result, the tacksmen was given the job of manager over a piece of the clan's territory. As manager, the tacksmen was responsible for overseeing the clan's resources in his bounds, such as food rents and man power. The reason the tacksmen was a vital instrument in the clan system was because he was the cornerstone to the reciprocal relationship between the clan elites and tenants. In his capacity as resource manager, the tacksmen was responsible for the collection from his tenants and distribution to the clan elites of the *calps*, the best beast given on the death of the head of the family,

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<sup>15</sup> C. Innes, ed., *The Black Book of Taymouth: With other papers from the Breadalbane Charter Room* (Kilchurn Society, 1986), 84; Macinnes, *Clanship, Commerce and the House of Stuart*, 13; Huntington Library, San Marino, California, LO8057, Letter from Marquis of Argyll to John, 1<sup>st</sup> Earl of Loudoun, Edinburgh, January 8, 1647.

<sup>16</sup> A. Mackenzie, *History of the Camerons; with Genealogies of the Principle Families of the Name* (Inverness, 1884), 94-105.



and *cuid-oidhche*, or hospitality, as well as to distribute to the clansmen steelbow and food in times of need which was collected from the clan elites. This reciprocal relationship was precisely what maintained the clan system; the tenants supported the chief and the clan elites, while they in turn provided for and protected their clansmen. As a result, the clan system was almost completely self-sufficient and was able to function independently of central government—thus leading to the attempts by James VI to integrate the clans in an effort to abolish many of the institutions of the clan system seen to be uncivilized.

## II

One of the primary causes of discontent in the Western Highlands and Isles was a direct result of the policies and political position of the Campbells. The Campbells of Argyll developed a close relationship with the monarch dating back to Robert the Bruce and over the years rose from petty chiefs in Argyllshire to powerful barons; their only rival was the Lordship of the Isles. The fall of the lordship in 1493 opened the door for the talented and crafty Campbells of Argyll to increase their position and prestige further at the expense of many of the clans in the region. The following examination of the political position of the prominent clans in the Western Highlands and Isles places James VI's policies in perspective and illustrates how events in the late 1500s continued to affect those policies as well as the social dynamics in the region. What emerges from conducting a clan-by-clan survey is the precarious position a number of clans were put in as a result of the ineptitude of central government when dealing with the region and the negative effect the crown's reliance on the Campbells of Argyll had on the region.

The destruction of the MacDonalds of Dunyveg was brought about by Archibald Campbell, 7<sup>th</sup> Earl of Argyll's, manipulation and subsequent crown interference in the feud between the MacDonalds of Dunyveg and the MacLeans of Duart. Since the early 1580s, Angus MacDonald of Dunyveg and Lachlan Mor MacLean of Duart had been at odds over possession of the Rinns of Islay—the MacDonalds were hereditary holders of the land, but Duart attempted to claim it as his own through an old office held by his ancestors during the reign of the Lordship



of the Isles. As Sir Robert Gordon retold in his history, “For a while [they] did continually vex one another with slaughters and outrages”.<sup>17</sup>

The continued rift between the MacDonalds and the MacLeans had effectively divided the isles; a handful of clans had flocked to the banner of the MacDonalds and MacLeans. The MacDonalds were supported by clansmen from the MacDonalds of Keppoch, MacDonalds of Sleat, MacDonalds of Glengarry, MacIans of Ardnamurchan, MacNeils of Gigha, MacAllisters of Loup, and MacPhees of Colonsay. With the support and encouragement of Argyll, MacLean of Duart was given a commission of fire and sword against Sir James MacDonald and the rebels on Islay in 1598. Aided by the MacLeods of Dunvegan, Camerons of Lochiel, MacKinnons of Strathordale, MacQuarries of Mull, and the MacNeils of Barra an assault on the MacDonalds was carried out and the entire island was ravaged.<sup>18</sup>

As hostilities continued, James VI was forced to turn to the Earl of Argyll to instill order; in the 1640s Argyll would face the repercussions for his actions and manipulation of both MacDonald and MacLean. An order was issued to Angus MacDonald and Hector MacLean to surrender their holding in Islay and Kintyre to Argyll in September 1603 and by October of the same year Argyll had been given a commission of fire and sword against both chiefs.<sup>19</sup> MacDonald’s resistance to the earl was futile. In 1608 Dunyveg Castle was surrendered and as a reward for Argyll’s service he was granted the charter for Kintyre with the stipulation that no lease was to be granted to MacDonalds, MacLeans, MacLeods, MacAllistairs, or MacNeils—all of whom were considered barbarous Highland clans.<sup>20</sup> With Argyll’s new charter of Kintyre his kinsman, Sir John Campbell of Cawdor, had begun to set his sights on Islay. Cawdor’s opportunity of acquiring Islay came to fruition when a revolt amongst the Islaymen led to the detention of Andrew Knox, Bishop of the Isles.

The Privy Council, furious with the MacDonalds in Islay, promised Cawdor the charter of Islay on the condition that he would personally fund an expedition to

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<sup>17</sup> As quoted in E.J. Cowan, “Clanship, Kindred and the Campbell acquisition of Islay,” *SHR* 58 (1979), 132-57, at pp. 133-4.

<sup>18</sup> D. Gregory, *History of the Western Highlands and Isles of Scotland, from A.D. 1493 to A.D. 1625* (Edinburgh, 1975), 285.

<sup>19</sup> E.J. Cowan, “Fishers in Drumlie Waters: Clanship and Campbell Expansion in the Time of Gilleasbuig Grumach”, *TGSI* LIV(1987), 269-312, at pp. 286-7. Also in E.J. Cowan, “Clanship”, 150.

<sup>20</sup> Gregory, *History*, 311.



Islay to put down the insurrection. On 27 January 1615, Cawdor positioned his cannons at Dunyveg and on the 1<sup>st</sup> of February began to lay siege to the castle.<sup>21</sup> By the next day Angus Og MacDonald had surrendered and Colla Ciotach had fled. Even though Sir John Campbell of Cawdor was granted his charter to Islay in October 1615, one last attempt to regain possession of Dunyveg Castle had been made by the MacDonalds but was defeated in September 1616 and the remnants of the clan were finally destroyed.

A number of chiefs, primarily of the Clan Donald, became entangled in the destruction of the MacDonalds of Dunyveg either through direct involvement or association. For example, under the leadership of Alistair MacRanald of Keppoch, the MacDonalds of Keppoch joined in the Islay rebellion which resulted in the clan being denounced rebels and the clan elites being put to the horn. Unfortunately for Alistair his troubles did not end with the Islay rebellion. While put to the horn for their actions on Islay, a commission of fire and sword was granted to Sir Lachlan Mackintosh against Alistair and his sons for their wasting of Sir Lachlan's lands in Lochaber. A similar commission had been issued to the Earl of Enzie, eldest son of the Marquis of Huntly, and both Mackintosh and Enzie were pursuing Alistair and his family. The combination of being put to the horn for Islay and having a commission of fire and sword issued against them was enough incentive for Keppoch and his second son, Donald Glas, to flee to Spain in 1616.<sup>22</sup> The MacDonalds of Keppoch would remain out of the picture until 1620 when both men returned and were granted pardons by James VI in exchange for information of a contemplated Spanish invasion of Britain.<sup>23</sup>

Only a few incidents of note arise in the history of the MacDonalds of Sleat between 1603 and 1616, "The first decade of the 17<sup>th</sup> century was a somewhat quiet and uneventful period in the annals of the House of Sleat";<sup>24</sup> however, one incident was a result of the Islay rebellion. Although Sleat did not personally join the rebellion a number of his men had and he personally came under suspicion for aiding Sir James MacDonald in the rebellion on Islay. Fortunately for Sleat, he was

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<sup>21</sup> Black, "Colla Ciotach", 206; Gregory, *History*, 363.

<sup>22</sup> A.M. Shaw, *Historical Memoirs of the House and Clan of Mackintosh and of the Clan Chattan* (London, 1880), 301.

<sup>23</sup> A. MacDonald & A. MacDonald, *The Clan Donald*, 3vols. (Inverness, 1896-1904) ii, 625-6.

<sup>24</sup> MacDonald & MacDonald, *Clan Donald*, iii, 48



not reprimanded for his suspicious behavior and was able to busy himself by acquiring a new charter for his lands of Sleat, North Uist and Skeirhough which was granted on 21 July 1614 for a fixed rent of £257 6s 8d.<sup>25</sup> By 1616 Donald Gorme appears to have remained relatively quiet, following along with the compulsory annual meetings and conducting land transactions; his good behavior was rewarded with his knighthood in 1617.

Although the Islay rebellion was a concern for many chiefs, Sleat's main concern during this period was his feud with his brother-in-law, Rory Mor MacLeod of Dunvegan. Hostilities appear to have begun with Sleat offending MacLeod leading to MacLeod's attack on Trotternish which Sleat responded to by raiding Harris.<sup>26</sup> The mutual raids continued until 1601 when the Privy Council became involved and ordered MacLeod into the custody of Argyll and Sleat into the custody of the Marquis of Huntly. The Privy Council then ordered both chiefs to give up their prisoners and to execute mutual assurances for keeping the peace. Although both chiefs had given up open warfare they would continue to occasionally harass each other and eventually end up on opposite sides during the Covenant Movement.<sup>27</sup>

As with MacDonald of Sleat, Donald MacAllan of Moidart, Captain of Clanranald, was able to avoid a personal link with the MacDonalds of Dunyveg, but unfortunately Clanranald was unable to avoid involvement in the collapse of the MacLeods of Lewis. Clanranald became involved in the conflict when Neil MacLeod and the surviving members of the clan were being pursued by MacKenzie of Kintail and pleaded for refuge within Clanranald's bounds. As a result of his aiding and abetting the Clan MacLeod, Clanranald was denounced a rebel.<sup>28</sup> After being involved in the escape of Neil MacLeod, Clanranald appears to have remained relatively quiet and was not directly involved in any conflicts; however, he was constantly forced to answer for his kinsmen's behavior.

In 1616 Clanranald agreed to all the regulations negotiated during the July meeting, including the stipulation to keep good rule and to reside on the isle of

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<sup>25</sup> MacDonald & MacDonald, *Clan Donald*, iii, 50.

<sup>26</sup> MacDonald & MacDonald, *Clan Donald*, iii, 39-42.

<sup>27</sup> I.F. Grant, *The MacLeods: The History of a Clan, 1200-1956* (London, 1959), 196-7; MacDonald & MacDonald, *Clan Donald*, iii, 45-6.

<sup>28</sup> MacDonald & MacDonald, *Clan Donald*, ii, 315



Tioram, and on 24 August he entered into a bond of friendship with Sir Rory Mor MacLeod of Dunvegan, Sir Lachlan MacKinnon of Strathordale, and Lachlan MacLean of Coll;<sup>29</sup> all chiefs who were likewise beholden to the compulsory annual meetings. Although Clanranald was able to keep himself out of trouble he unfortunately had a great deal of trouble keeping his kinsmen in order in accordance with the 1616 Regulations; “Clanranald, however well disposed towards the Government, had more than enough to do to keep order among his unruly clansmen, his own nearest kinsmen being the most unmanageable of all”.<sup>30</sup> Donald MacAllan, Captain of Clanranald, died in 1618 which may explain why he was not instrumental in the turmoil created by the Islay rebellion; however, his son, John, who would inherit the captaincy would be plagued by the debts incurred by his father in his attempts to instill order among the clan.

Another branch of the Clan Donald that had difficulty keeping order was the MacDonalds of Glengarry. Although Glengarry was able to personally avoid participation in the Islay rebellion his son, Alasdair, had been taken prisoner by Sir James MacDonald and upon his release joined the rebellion.<sup>31</sup> However, the biggest problems Glengarry faced between 1601 and 1622 were his dispute with MacKenzie of Kintail over possession of Morar and his clan’s raiding of Clanranald territory. As a result of these feuds Glengarry was denounced a rebel on 25 March 1609 for failing to appear before the Privy Council to answer for his, and his clansmen’s, conduct and again on 21 February 1610 for not answering for his clansmen’s raids on Clanranald.<sup>32</sup> Even though he was denounced a rebel as early as 1609 his feud with Kintail would continue until 1622 with the occasional wasting of each other’s land.<sup>33</sup> However, in 1616, Glengarry’s feud with Clanranald ended when the two chiefs entered into a bond of friendship; Clanranald was willing to repair injuries done by his men to Glengarry’s lands in Knoydart and Glengarry offered to make good any damage caused by his men to Clanranald’s territory.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> MacDonald & MacDonald, *Clan Donald*, ii, 317

<sup>30</sup> MacDonald & MacDonald, *Clan Donald*, ii, 318

<sup>31</sup> MacDonald & MacDonald, *Clan Donald*, ii, 414

<sup>32</sup> MacDonald & MacDonald, *Clan Donald*, ii, 411

<sup>33</sup> N.H. MacDonald, *The Clan Ranald of Knoydart & Glengarry: a History of the MacDonalds or MacDonnells of Glengarry* (Edinburgh, 1979), 33-7.

<sup>34</sup> MacDonald & MacDonald, *Clan Donald*, ii, 415



The hostile situation in the Western Highlands and Isles appeared to be reaching a lull by 1616; the rebellion on Islay had come to an end as did many of the feuds. However, this was not to be the case for the MacIans of Ardnamurchan. The events recorded in the history of the Clan MacIan are similar to those of the MacDonalds of Dunyveg in that they had become victims of Campbell of Argyll's increasing power in the region. The MacIans were faced with internal problems resulting from disputes within the clan elite over leadership of the clan during the minority of its chief. The dissension of the clan, begun in 1596, led the Earl of Argyll to enforce his feudal superiority over Ardnamurchan in 1602.<sup>35</sup> Once superiority was gained, Argyll turned to his extensive network of kinsmen to complete the destruction of the clan in much the same way as he turned to Campbell of Cawdor to ensure acquisition of Islay. The task of managing Ardnamurchan and the Clan MacIan was assigned to Donald Campbell of Barbreck-Lochawe, half-brother to Sir John Campbell of Cawdor, in 1612.<sup>36</sup> However, the managerial skills of Donald Campbell increased the instability of the Clan MacIan; as Donald Gregory stated, Donald Campbell "made himself very obnoxious to the natives by his severities".<sup>37</sup> The heavy handed administration of Donald Campbell created a period of uneasy co-existence and resulted in continuous problems over payments of rents and obedience to Argyll which would culminate in open hostilities and piracy among the Clan MacIan in 1625.<sup>38</sup>

The rapacious measures taken by the Campbells of Argyll were not solely aimed at the Clan Donald; even their own allies were sometimes victimized by Campbell policies. The position of MacLean of Duart was severely undermined by the Campbells' manipulative tactics in their acquisition of Islay. As discussed previously, the MacLeans of Duart were at the heart of the conflict in Islay. Lachlan MacLean appears to have welcomed the assistance of the Earl of Argyll in his effort to claim the Rinns of Islay for himself; in fact, Lachlan would ensure the alliance with Argyll by joining the earl in the suppression of the rebellion of Catholics in Ulster. However, the relationship between Argyll and Duart seems to have been

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<sup>35</sup> Gregory, *History*, 405-8.

<sup>36</sup> MacDonald & MacDonald, *Clan Donald*, 180.

<sup>37</sup> Gregory, *History*, 408.

<sup>38</sup> See chapter 4 "Central Government and the Western Highlands and Isles" for details of the commissions granted against the MacIans for their piracy and lawlessness in 1625.



strained by Argyll's betrayal. After Duart had spent large sums in both Ulster and Islay he had expected to receive the charter for Islay as compensation once Argyll had successfully defeated the MacDonalds. This was not to be the case, instead Duart was overlooked and Campbell of Cawdor was granted Islay.

MacLean of Duart's involvement in Ulster and Islay placed the clan in an unsettling situation. Without the charter for Islay, and its corresponding rental income, the sum of Sir Lachlan MacLean's financial expenditures created an enormous deficit in the clan's resources. By 1616, the MacLean *fine* was forced to place the Duart estate in the hands of a group of trustees to protect the estate from the incompetence of Hector MacLean of Duart.<sup>39</sup>

The policies of the Campbells of Argyll not only had an effect on their immediate surroundings but also made an impact on the MacKenzies of Kintail. The actions of Kenneth MacKenzie, Lord Kintail, appear to be an emulation of the tactics used by Argyll. Kintail's involvement in the destruction of the MacLeods of Lewis and his relationship with Neil MacLeod mirrored the means by which Argyll and Cawdor were able to acquire Kintyre and Islay, respectively. Although Kenneth MacKenzie's seat was at Kintail and his territory extended through Ross and Cromarty, with the exception of Easter Ross, he was eager to increase his power and prestige; this mentality would carry through the first half of the seventeenth century and became a primary motive behind the clan's involvement in the Civil Wars.

The attempted extirpation of the MacLeods of Lewis was begun in 1597 with the creation of the Fife Undertakers by James VI and parliament. The MacLeods of Lewis had been deeply entrenched in a family feud over inheritance of the head of the clan; outright bloodshed and kidnapping between legitimate and illegitimate sons had been rampant. As a result, the Fife Undertakers were given the task of removing the MacLeods of Lewis and establishing royal burghs in Stornoway and Lochaber, as well as erecting six parish churches in the area.<sup>40</sup> Similar to James's attitude to the feud between MacDonald of Dunyveg and MacLean of Duart, there were early attempts to settle the dispute, but when they proved ineffective James was forced to proceed to complete annihilation of the clan in order to instill peace.

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<sup>39</sup> N. Maclean-Bristol, "The MacLeans from 1560-1707: A Re-Appraisal", *Seventeenth Century in the Highlands* (Inverness Field Club, 1986), 82.

<sup>40</sup> Mathew, *Scotland under Charles I*, 187.



MacKenzie of Kintail's involvement in the struggle for Lewis began when he obtained a re-grant of his lands which he was able to extend to include Lewis. When James was informed of the re-grant he ordered Kintail to resign it to the crown and, in turn, granted it to the three remaining Fife Undertakers: Lord Balmerino, Sir George Hay, and Sir James Spence of Wormiston.<sup>41</sup> With his plan to peacefully acquire Lewis thwarted, MacKenzie joined forces with Neil MacLeod, surviving heir to the MacLeod of Lewis, in his attempt to remove the Fife Undertakers from Lewis and the two entered into a conspiracy to seize a supply ship bound for Lewis.

Once the Fife Undertakers abandoned their mission and MacKenzie finally acquired legal title to Lewis he betrayed Neil MacLeod and sailed to Lewis with 700 men to enforce his superiority. Many inhabitants submitted to MacKenzie, but Neil and his closest followers took refuge on Berinsay and awaited an opportunity to counter-attack. The death of Kenneth MacKenzie afforded Neil and his men the opportunity to make one last attempt to regain Lewis in 1612. The attempt failed and Neil was forced to flee to Harris where he secretly stayed under the protection of his kinsmen Rory Mor MacLeod of Dunvegan. Neil eventually surrendered to Rory Mor and asked to be turned over to James in England, rather than Edinburgh. The two slowly made their way to England and while in Glasgow the Privy Council had received word of Rory's harboring of Neil and charged him with treason. As a result, Rory had little choice but to turn over Neil or risk losing his own territory; Neil was summarily executed in April 1613.<sup>42</sup>

With the MacDonalds of Dunyveg and the MacLeods of Lewis essentially destroyed and a number of clans in a precarious position the Western Highlands and Isles began a slow transformation from a land fraught with feuds and rebellions into a less violent and, in the eyes of central government, a more acceptable region in respect of their increasing law-abiding behavior. A letter from Rory Mor MacLeod of Dunvegan in 1622 praised James for his success in the region and for "this delectable time of peace".<sup>43</sup> Sixteen years later, in 1638, the Gentlemen of the Isles would claim "that the Yles for the present is in as good estate as manie parts of the

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<sup>41</sup> "The Genealogie of the Surname of M'Kenzie", J.R.N. MacPhail, (ed.), *Highland Papers*, 4 vols. (SHS, 1914 -1934), ii, 61-62; Grant, *Clan MacLeod*, 204-5.

<sup>42</sup> "The Ewill Trowbles of the Lewes", *Highland Papers*, ii, 278; Grant, *Clan MacLeod*, 216-7.

<sup>43</sup> *RPC*, xii, 744-5.



countrey”.<sup>44</sup> It was due to the 1616 Regulations that these claims of peace in the region could be made. Through the regulations, central government was able to standardize the policies employed for instilling law and order in the Western Highlands and Isles and was able to enforce the compulsory annual meetings between the island chiefs and the Privy Council. By expanding on previous agreements reached with the island chiefs, the 1616 Regulations diminished the polarization between the Highlands and Lowlands and hindered the traditional clan system.

One of the key agreements reached between a representative of the crown and the chiefs was the Statutes of Iona in 1609. Andrew Knox, Bishop of the Isles, took it upon himself to try to enforce a scheme of his own device to resolve the problems within the Western Highlands and Isles. In 1609, Knox arranged for the release of the prominent chiefs of the isles who had been incarcerated by Andrew Stewart, Lord Ochiltree, in 1608 and brought them to his court of justiciary on the Isle of Iona on 23 August. With broad instructions from James to reduce the power of the chiefs, the bishop forced the chiefs in attendance to submit to him and to sign a series of statutes. The final draft of the Statutes of Iona included nine statutes and a bond of allegiance which was merely the Bishop of the Isles’ attempt to prove that the statutes were drafted for the king’s benefit and not his own. Of the nine statutes agreed to on Iona, the most significant were the establishing of churches and the maintaining parish ministers, the abolition of hospitality which included a ban on the sale of wine, and the requirement of chiefs and clan gentry to education their children in the Lowlands with an emphasis on the English language.<sup>45</sup> The effectiveness of these statutes was minuscule; no actions were taken by central government to actually enforce any of the statutes and Knox did not even get the usual and customary congratulations on his return to the Privy Council.<sup>46</sup> However, these statutes are key to the evolution of Highland policies not for what they accomplished in 1609 but the fact that many of the issues were repeated in the 1616 Regulations. It appears that the only real effect that Knox’s endeavor had in 1609 was to prove that the chiefs could be peacefully dealt with and that he was

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<sup>44</sup> *RPC*, 2<sup>nd</sup> series, vii, 26.

<sup>45</sup> *RPC*, ix, 26-30.

<sup>46</sup> J. Goodare, “The Statutes of Iona in Context”, *SHR* LXXVII (1998), 31-57, at p. 39-40.



successful in getting the chiefs to agree to meet with the Privy Council at a future date.

A great deal of progress was made in 1610 when a conference was held with the island chiefs in Edinburgh. No new agreements were made, nor were the Statutes of Iona renewed, in fact no mention of the statutes was even made, but the two parties finally began to realize they could be in the same room with each other and could possibly work together. As a result, detailed arrangements were made to meet regularly as it appeared that they could possibly resolve the problems in the region through negotiation. Between 1610 and 1615 the chiefs were summoned by the Privy Council to Edinburgh in accordance with the agreement reached at the 1610 conference primarily for the purpose of paying their royal rents which was at the heart of James VI's plan dating back to his instructions to Knox which were ignored by the bishop. However, because of the rebellions on Islay and the decline in royal rent payments, central government was forced to draw up a new set of regulations in 1616 many of which echoed the Statutes of Iona though they were never directly cited.

On 10 July 1616 six chiefs from the Western Highlands and Isles presented themselves before the Privy Council and found themselves compelled to accept a series of regulations which had the potential of placing the clan system in jeopardy. The new regulations stipulated that the chiefs were to present themselves yearly with their leading kinsmen to answer any complaints made against them and to provide cautions for their future good behavior and sureties for their next attendance. The chiefs also had the size of their households reduced and were to live in houses, rather than castles, where they would supervise farming. Chiefs were no longer allowed to have more than one galley and were no longer to uplift hospitality as they toured their territory as it was now deemed oppressive. All leases to tenants were now to be set at a fixed rent and it was the responsibility of the chief to rid his estate of "idle" people. Within the chief's household the consumption of wine was limited, while the carrying of weapons was strictly regulated. Lastly, the regulations dictated that parish schools were to be erected and all the chiefs were to send their children to be educated in the Lowlands.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> *RPC*, x, 773-6.



One important aspect of the new regulations was the reiteration of the mandate for all chiefs' children over the age of nine to be sent to the Lowlands to be educated in the English language. To ensure this directive was adhered to the Privy Council added the stipulation that if a child was not sent to school they had no legal claim to their inheritance. The regulation on education was a direct attack on both the Gaelic culture of the Highlands and the fostering practices of the clans previously discussed.<sup>48</sup> According to the Privy Council, the intention was "That the vulgar English Tongue be universalie planted, and the Irish language, which is one of the chiefe and principal causes of the continuance of barbaritie and incivilitie among the inhabitants of the Isles and Highlands, may be removit".<sup>49</sup> By forcing children to attend schoolhouses, not only were they attempting to bring to an end the culture of the region by removing the indigenous language, but the government also attempted to block any alliances that could be developed by sending a child to live and be cared for by another family.

The largest impact which the 1616 Regulations had on the clans was an order to the chiefs to present themselves before the Privy Council once a year on the 10<sup>th</sup> of July to ensure their obedience, as well as their clansmen's, without having to be officially summoned. The chiefs involved in these meetings were those who had been seen as either the cause of the unrest in the isles or those powerful enough to warrant the harnessing of their strength; hence the original list of chiefs included the Captain of Clanranald, MacDonald of Sleat, MacLean of Duart, MacLean of Lochbuie, MacLean of Coll, MacLeod of Dunvegan and MacKinnon of Strathordale.<sup>50</sup> At first glance it may come as a surprise that such powerful chiefs would submit themselves to the Privy Council; however, one must realize that these chiefs had recently seen the destruction of three clans at the hands of the government, the MacLeods of Lewis, the MacDonalds of Dunyveg, and the MacGregors, and many were in an uncertain position themselves. Therefore, the chiefs' compliance with the Privy Council's annual meetings was a means of self-preservation rather than surrender.

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<sup>48</sup> For a discussion of fosterage see above, p. 23.

<sup>49</sup> *RPC*, x, 773-6.

<sup>50</sup> This list would later include MacNeil of Barra in 1629 and MacLean of Morvern in 1632.



The reasoning behind the Privy Council's "annual visit" was simply to force the chiefs to answer any charges against them and more importantly to ensure "that by their comeing heir yeirlie thay may be reducit to civilitie and maid to acknowledge their obedience to his Majestie and his lawis".<sup>51</sup> The chiefs themselves expanded on the issue of "civility", when in a petition for relief of their annual visit they claimed the purpose for their attendance was that they "might learn civility and, by imitation of the noblemen and others of the incountry, might become peaceable and obedient subjects".<sup>52</sup> In order to guarantee that the chiefs would adhere to the order for an annual meeting, the Council mandated that each chief was to appoint an agent in Edinburgh, as well as requiring them to find cautions and sureties for their good behavior and regular attendance. All three of the conditions had not only the effect of limiting the chiefs' strength but would also make certain that the impact on the chiefs' pocket book would also force their obedience.

The 1616 Regulations and the subsequent annual meetings finally brought an end to the disorganized attempts to civilize the region and laid down, for what appears to be the first time, a uniform policy for the Western Highlands and Isles. The regulations marked a shift in policy away from hostile, aggressive "pet-projects" towards a more cooperative relationship between the chiefs and central government. Although the regulations limited the power of the chiefs, central government began to work within the existing framework of the clan system to instill peace and to control its strength rather than attempting to aggressively destroy it.

Due to the success of the meetings in subduing the Western Highlands and Isles, Charles I's government was not forced to cultivate any semblance of a Highland policy because the region had been deemed civilized. Throughout the reign of Charles I the Western Highlands and Isles, as well as the whole of the Highlands, were dealt with on a need only basis and often resulted in central government merely presiding over judicial cases. The relative peace in the Highlands which Charles I had inherited from his father allowed him to direct his focus on his desire to reclaim the crown's wealth and power from the nobility. To

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<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

<sup>52</sup> *RPC*, 2<sup>nd</sup> series, v, 560.



facilitate these reclamations Charles enacted an Act of Revocation in 1625. An Act of Revocation had been used in the past to protect the king from the consequences of misgovernment during a previous reign. Essentially, the use of such an act allowed the king to revoke any grants of land or authority that were deemed detrimental to the crown and central government. Not only did Charles's actions anger the landholders targeted by the act, but it made many landholders fearful of the king's lust for their land in the future.

Even though the Act of Revocation was unable to enact sweeping landholding reform, there were some members of the elites who fell victim to the compulsory surrender. In the Western Highlands and Isles both MacLean of Duart and Archibald Campbell, later Marquis of Argyll, were singled out to surrender their land and hereditary office respectively. In practice, the act was used to order MacLean of Duart in 1635 to surrender his possession of Iona granted to his family by the Bishop of the Isles in the 1570s. The loss of the income from Iona complicated matters for Duart who was facing financial difficulties, but the transaction had little effect on the region. On the other hand, Argyll's surrender in 1628 of his hereditary position as Justice General in exchange for the office of Justiciar for Argyll and the Isles created a controversy within the Western Highlands and Isles due to the location of the new justice courts.<sup>53</sup>

The Campbells of Argyll had held the position of Justice General of Scotland since 1514 when the office was granted to Colin, 1<sup>st</sup> Earl of Argyll. As Justice General the earls of Argyll were able to increase their political position to such an extent that in practice they were second in power and dignity to only the monarch within the Western Highlands and Isles. In their capacity as Justice General the earls of Argyll exercised judicial authority over criminal cases, occasionally presiding over cases of treason, and were issued commissions of lieutenancy from the crown, as needed, for military endeavors necessary to facilitate law and order. In April 1628 Archibald Campbell, Lord Lorne, later Marquis of Argyll, attempted, unsuccessfully, to have the hereditary office renewed through the Revocation. A contract between Charles I and Lorne was entered into in which the Campbells of Argyll were forced to renounce their office to Charles and his successors in

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<sup>53</sup> *Collectanea de Rebus Albanicis* (Iona Club, 1848), 185-6; HMC, Report 4 MSS of Argyll, 486.



exchange for £4,000 and the heritable office of Justiciar within the bounds of the sheriffdoms of Argyll, Tarbert, and all of the isles with the right to half of the fines and escheats raised.<sup>54</sup> The infefting of Argyll as Justiciar for Argyll and the Isles created a source of contention between the island chiefs and Lorne because of the new jurisdictional bounds of the office. Even though the new office had a limited impact on the Campbells of Argyll's role in the region, the main difference being that he could no longer preside over cases involving treason, the fact that the locations of the courts were not specifically detailed in the new charter made the island chiefs question whether or not Lorne had the authority to hold court wherever he chose. In December 1628, Donald Gorme MacDonald of Sleat, on behalf of all island chiefs, submitted a petition to the council in response to Lorne's new office claiming the grant violated a 1504 Act of Parliament passed during the reign of James IV. The Act dictated that the court for the North Isles was to be held at Dingwall or Inverness and for the South Isles it was to be held at Tarbert or Lochkinkerran.<sup>55</sup> The petition was endorsed by the council, and the case was to be heard the following June; in the meantime, Lorne was forbidden to hold court for the North Isles and was not to take legal proceedings against any of the inhabitants.<sup>56</sup> In June 1629 the island chiefs and Lorne presented their cases before the Privy Council and after much discussion Lorne agreed to hold the southern court in Tarbert and the northern court in Inverness, with the condition "it wer not privative nor exclusive of him to keep courts indefinitely against particular delinquents in the Isles where they dwell".<sup>57</sup> The chiefs were quick to object to such a condition based on the fact that no advocate would journey to the Hebrides to try a case, and the inhabitants would be denied a proper defense. The matter was eventually settled by an Act of the Privy Council, 4 September 1629, giving Lorne the power to hold his primary justice court for the Northern Isles in Inverness and "His Majesty's Commission" granted Lorne the right to hold court in any other part as needed.<sup>58</sup> For all intensive purposes Lorne got what he wanted, he was able to hold court anywhere he needed to. Many of the island chiefs would add this issue to the

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<sup>54</sup> HMC, Report 4, 486.

<sup>55</sup> *RPC*, 2<sup>nd</sup> series, ii, 632.

<sup>56</sup> *RPC*, 2<sup>nd</sup> series, ii, 634.

<sup>57</sup> *RPC*, 2<sup>nd</sup> series, iii, 164.

<sup>58</sup> *HMC Report IV* Appendix, 487; *RPC*, 2<sup>nd</sup> series, iii, 272; *HMC Report VI* Appendix, 624.



growing list of grievances they had against the Campbells which would culminate in the numerous attacks on the Campbell estates during the 1640s.

Other than the forfeit of MacLean's lands and the surrender and regrant of Argyll office, as a whole the Act of Revocation had little effect on the clans of the Western Highlands and Isles even though in theory the act could have had major consequences for the region. In theory, Charles could have done serious damage to the clans by enforcing the act in the region because technically the islands were crown property.<sup>59</sup> However, since the clans had begun to cooperate with central government through the annual meetings and had proved valuable as government agents in enforcing commissions, it is quite possible that Charles did not want to meddle in the region without the financial resources to fulfill his obligation for compensation and to halt any potential uprisings.

Another problem Charles created for himself was his alteration to the Church of Scotland and his increasing reliance on bishops for counsel, which became clearly evident during the Parliament of 1633. One of the main issues during the 1633 Parliament concerned the king's prerogative rights in the structure of the church. Many ministers in Scotland were worried about the impact this parliament would have on the future of the Kirk. As Samuel Rutherford wrote, "I see and hear, at home and abroad, nothing but matter of grief and discouragement, which indeed maketh my life bitter . . . I am afraid now (as many other are) that, at the sitting down of our Parliament, our Lord Jesus and His spouse [the Kirk] shall be roughly handled."<sup>60</sup> As many members of the clergy soon found out, their fears became realities. A total of thirty-one acts were presented to the House; all passed smoothly, except for two.<sup>61</sup> One of the debated acts dealt with the reinstitution of previous religious legislation, chiefly the Five Articles of Perth which had been ratified in

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<sup>59</sup> As mentioned on p.27, by the 17<sup>th</sup> century the majority of the clans' territories were confirmed and held by crown charter and were, therefore, vulnerable to Charles's revocation if he chose to enforce his position over the chieftains.

<sup>60</sup> A. A. Boner (ed.), *Letters of Samuel Rutherford* (Edinburgh, 1891), 79 & 87.

<sup>61</sup> G. W. Johnson (ed.), *The Fairfax Correspondence: Memoirs of the Reign of Charles the First* (London, 1848), 286.



1621 but had re-emerged as a hotly contested issue in 1633;<sup>62</sup> the other addressed the scope of the king's prerogative in regard to dictating the clergy's apparel.

The animosity towards the innovations in the Kirk and the increasing power of the episcopacy was not felt within the Western Highlands and Isles as a whole. As will be detailed in chapter 5, the religious organization in the region was extremely frail. Many parishes in the Western Highlands and Isles were vacant or poorly ministered. Therefore, the potential for any form of revolt was severely diminished by the fact that few were aware such changes to the Kirk were even being undertaken. By the time a clear and concise religious program was established in the Western Highlands and Isles, primarily through the erection of the Synod of Argyll in 1638, the Covenanters were in control of both the Church of Scotland and central government. Thus, when religious conformity was re-introduced with the support of an organized body, such as the Synod of Argyll, the innovations Charles implemented were summarily removed. Where Charles's religious innovations would have an effect in the Western Highlands and Isles is in the fact that these issues would lay the foundation for the emergence of the Covenant Movement and Argyll's support for the cause would further increase his dominance over the region.

### III

The Covenant regime which began to develop in 1637 was a grass-roots movement started among ministers and a handful of nobles irate at the innovations imposed on the Kirk by Charles and his advisors. The growth of the movement was more of a bottom to top spreading of support culminating in a nationwide campaign in favor of the National Covenant. Once the movement spread from ministers to the nobility the tone of the argument changed from anger towards the changes in the Kirk to open hostility to the royal prerogative that created the alterations to both temporal and secular institutions. Therefore, the National Covenant was drafted as a critique of Charles's system of government under the guise of a concern for religion. On the

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<sup>62</sup> The Five Articles of Perth were passed by the General Assembly at Perth in 1618. The articles reintroduced private baptism, private communion, confirmation by bishops, observance of holy days, and kneeling at communion.



surface the Covenant regime's primary goal was the removal of bishops out of concern for the Presbyterian religion. In actuality, the intention of the nobility who signed the Covenant was to limit Charles's powers and regain the authority they possessed prior to the Act of Revocation and before the increasing power of the episcopacy in secular offices. As the historian John Spalding stated "here you may see they began at religion as the grounds of their quarrel, whereas their intention was only bent against the King's majesty and his royal prerogative".<sup>63</sup>

The overall tenor of the Covenant Movement became an open opposition to the absolutism of Charles I and his use of the royal prerogative. Many supporters of the Covenant were angered by the fact that Charles had sought little consultation from the Scots on his Revocation and religious innovations. Although many within the nobility wanted a constitutional monarch, one answerable to Parliament, a struggle ensued between the desire to destroy the principle of Royal Prerogative and the preservation of the monarch. As I.B. Cowan states, "most authorities are agreed that the prime cause of division lay in the basic inconsistency of the covenant whereby an attempt was made to defend the person and authority of the king while at the same time promoting policies contrary to his interest".<sup>64</sup> This inconsistency laid the foundation for the Engagement of 1647-8, which divided the Covenanters into moderate and radical factions. As the radicals, under the Marquis of Argyll, made more blatant attacks on the monarchy resulting in Charles's surrender and transfer to the English Parliamentarians, the moderates formed a weak alliance intent on rescuing the king and preserving the monarchy.

The royalist ideology that spread through Scotland was primarily a reaction to the Covenanters' attacks on the role of the monarch and the "new" religion. Unlike the Covenant Movement, the spread of the royalist faction began at the top of the social order and spread downward. The root of the Royalist party was among the Scottish courtiers, the majority of which supported Charles's policies both secular and temporal and were reaping the benefits of life at Charles's court. Not surprisingly, the ranks of the royalists swelled as the Covenanters increased their attacks on the position of the monarch. Men, such as the Marquis of Montrose,

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<sup>63</sup> John Spalding, *The Memoriall of the Trubles of Scotland and England* 2vols. (Aberdeen, 1792) i, 58.

<sup>64</sup> I.B. Cowan, "The Covenanters: A Revision Article", *SHR* XLVII(1968), 35-52, at p. 40.



broke away from the Covenanters and joined the royalists fearing the repercussions of overthrowing the king. Therefore, the royalist faction was not wholly opposed to the National Covenant, but was a conglomeration of royalists and moderate Covenanters who believed in the National Covenant but were opposed to the infringement of the king's authority called for by the radical Covenanters.

As the hostilities between the Covenanters and the monarch escalated so too did the possibility of an armed conflict. It appears the Covenanters were the first to take action in order to defend and maintain their hold within Scotland. The Covenanters quickly organized a warning system in response to the threat of invasion by sea from both Ireland and England. A system of warning beacons was established; these beacons were primarily installed by the Earl of Argyll along the Kintyre peninsula and were manned by Campbells in response to the threats from the Earl of Antrim and the sighting of Charles's fleet off the western coast.<sup>65</sup> The Covenanters also placed garrisons and maintained fortifications throughout the kingdom. A supplication from the Earl of Argyll on 25 June 1642 requested a warrant to maintain the fortification he erected in Loch Kilherran that indicates the level of concern amongst the Covenant leadership of an invasion from Ireland and the potential uprising by the Clan Donald. According to the supplication, Argyll erected the fortification "during the late troubles" opposite Ireland and he had intended to demolish it but thought it better to get the Privy Council's advice. The council instructed Argyll to maintain the fort and to do everything required to strengthen himself, friends, and followers to counter the Clan Donald's alliance with the Earl of Antrim, their role in the Irish Rebellion, and the enmity of Antrim and Clan Donald for Argyll.<sup>66</sup> The bulk of the Covenanters' preparations were preemptive measures against the rumored plans for an invasion of royalists both across the North Channel and across the Border.

The royalists were not as well organized as the Covenanters in their military planning and the rumored invasions were severely flawed in their planning, resulting in a haphazard attempt to invade in 1639 before success was had with the arrival of MacColla's Irish regiments in 1644. Charles's grandiose plan to oppose the

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<sup>65</sup> D. Stevenson, *Highland Warrior: Alasdair MacColla and the Civil Wars* (Edinburgh, 2003), 67; Stevenson, *Scottish Revolution*, 101.

<sup>66</sup> *RPC*, 2<sup>nd</sup>, vii, 185.



Covenanters was successfully diminished by the pre-emptive preparations of the Covenant Army. The plan for invasion of Scotland was four-fold: 30,000 men in England under the leadership of Charles were to cross the border, Hamilton and the Royal Navy were to land 5,000 men at Aberdeen to join with the Earl of Huntly's forces, Antrim was to invade the Western Isles with 5,000 men to join forces with Sir Donald MacDonald of Sleat, and, once Antrim was safely across, Wentworth was to send a force to Dumbarton of roughly 10,000 and establish a base for the fleet on Arran.<sup>67</sup> Unfortunately for Charles his plan proved to be a failure. Charles was hopelessly optimistic as to the size and speed of mustering Englishmen to fight in Scotland and made little real attempt to muster royalist Scots. At the same time that Charles was having difficulties mustering in England, Huntly was struggling to maintain his hold on Aberdeen and was eventually defeated by James Graham, Earl of Montrose, and Lt. Col. David Leslie, military leaders of the Covenant Army in Scotland.<sup>68</sup> The defeat of Huntly in Aberdeen meant that Hamilton had nowhere to land his forces, and no army to join him. Problems were also experienced across the North Channel as Antrim's boasts of mustering capabilities were out of proportion with reality and the large army intended to come out of Ulster never fully materialized. To make matters worse for the royalists, Wentworth's men in Ireland were not ready until June, by which time Dumbarton and Arran were already occupied by the Covenanters, leaving him no safe place to land his forces.<sup>69</sup>

The failure of Charles's plan prompted Wentworth to advise Charles to postpone the attack until 1640 rather than risk failure. However, Charles would not listen and he and Hamilton remained optimistic that they would be able to defeat what was seen as a rising of ministers.<sup>70</sup> Hamilton's optimism was rooted in his belief in the Scottish support provided by the Marquis of Huntly in the north-east, Lord Ogilvie in the Central Highlands and the clans in the Western Highlands and Isles. Hamilton was proved correct in his confidence by a letter sent from Sir Donald Gorme MacDonald of Sleat to Huntly 24 September 1638; yet, it would take

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<sup>67</sup> M.C. Fissell, *The Bishops' Wars: Charles I's Campaign against Scotland, 1638-40* (Cambridge, 1994), 5 & 8; J. Ohlmeyer, *Civil War and Restoration in the Three Stuart Kingdoms: The Career of Ranald MacDonnell, marquis of Antrim, 1609-1683* (Cambridge, 1993), 82.

<sup>68</sup> Montrose was an active Covenanter during the Bishops' Wars, it would not be until 1640 that he would defect to the royalists.

<sup>69</sup> Ohlmeyer, *Civil War and Restoration*, 88.

<sup>70</sup> Stevenson, *Scottish Revolution*, 141.



years before support from the Western Highlands and Isles would come to fruition. In the letter, Donald Gorme MacDonald wrote that he, the captain of Clanranald, the MacDonalds of Glengarry, and the whole name of Clan Donald held a clan gathering and swore to “live and die” in the King’s service,<sup>71</sup> but Hamilton was forced to warn Charles that the Clan Donald would act only out of hatred for the Campbells and not through loyalty to the crown.<sup>72</sup> Regardless of the reasons behind Clan Donald’s support, the addition of a clan as large as Clan Donald provided the backbone to Montrose and MacColla’s campaign in 1644 and thus was a significant addition to Charles’s ailing royalist forces.

Charles’s inclusion of an Irish force under the leadership of Antrim in his plan to defeat the Covenanters was a key component of the “Scottish troubles”. Due to the period of neglect of the Western Highlands and Isles by central government the region was vulnerable to invasion from Ireland and was in a position to aid an armed incursion of well-trained Irishmen, a majority of whom had military experience on the continent during the Thirty Years’ War. The involvement of the Western Highlands and Isles in the “Scottish troubles” effectively began with what has been termed the “Antrim Plot”, an invasion planned by Irish Confederates into Scotland for the king’s cause. Although the plot implicated the clans on the western seaboard due to the kin relation between MacDonalds and MacDonnells on both sides of the channel, the Covenanters were more concerned with the actions of Ranald MacDonnell, 2<sup>nd</sup> Earl of Antrim. The Committee of Estates relied almost completely on the Campbell network for protection of the coastline in the event Antrim crossed the channel, as is evident in the system of warning beacons and the manning of garrisons throughout the Western Highlands, including the fort at Lochhead in Kintyre. Surprisingly, little was done by the government under the Covenanters or by the Earl of Argyll to thwart Antrim’s attempts to incite a MacDonald rising in the region.

The driving force behind the Antrim Plot was the lingering MacDonald quest to rejoin the MacDonalds in Ireland with those in Scotland reminiscent of the

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<sup>71</sup> HMC, Report XI appendix vi, MSS of Duke of Hamilton, 101.

<sup>72</sup> HMC, Report XI appendix vi, 95.



Lordship of the Isles.<sup>73</sup> It was the desire of the Earl of Antrim and other MacDonalds to recreate the Lordship of Isles that had been forfeited in 1493. The forfeiture of the Lordship of the Isles resulted in the dissecting of the Clan Donald with various ancestral lands being sold or granted to neighboring clans and the displacement of vast numbers of the Clan Donald. As seen in the destruction of the MacDonalds of Dunyveg the clan that profited most from the dissolving of the lordship was the Clan Campbell. The 7<sup>th</sup> Earl of Argyll's attacks following the demise of the MacDonalds of Dunyveg included imposing punitive fines on the remnant gentry in Kintyre whose loyalty was questionable and by evicting a number of the Clan Donald from Islay, Jura, and, more importantly, from Colonsay taking captive in the process Colla Ciotach, father of Alasdair MacColla.<sup>74</sup> In the wake of the collapse of the MacDonalds of Dunyveg and the evictions of MacDonalds from the isles a number of the clan sought refuge in Ireland under the protection of the Earl of Antrim. Not only had the Clan Campbell benefited from the destruction of the Clan Donald after the forfeiture of the lordship, but since the outbreak of the Bishops' Wars the 8<sup>th</sup> Earl, and later Marquis, of Argyll had begun using the conflict as further justification to attack the Clan Donald. Therefore, many MacDonalds within Antrim's ranks had a score to settle with Argyll and the Campbells. Little provoking was necessary to employ the Clan Donald on both sides of the Irish Sea in the "Scottish troubles" as the opportunity to regain their ancestral lands at the cost of the Clan Campbell was too good to pass up.

By playing on the desires for a united Gaelic world and revenge against the Clan Campbell, Charles I was able to enlist the aid of the Clan Donald with relative ease. As early as 1639 Charles was negotiating with the Earl of Antrim and Sir Donald Gorme MacDonald of Sleat, enticing them with offers of land at the expense of Clan Campbell; Antrim was promised "whatsoever land he can conquer from them [Campbells], he, having pretense of right shall have the same".<sup>75</sup> The negotiations resulted in commissions to MacDonald of Sleat and Antrim on 5 June

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<sup>73</sup> A thorough discussion of the breakdown of the pan-Gaelic world and division between Irish and Scottish *Gaedhil* which Antrim and the Clan Donald wished to resurrect is given in S. Ellis, "The collapse of the Gaelic World, 1450-1650", *Irish Historical Studies* 31:124 (Nov. 1999), pages 449-69. Especially relevant is his discussion of the demise of the Lordship of the Isles, p. 450 & 463-5.

<sup>74</sup> Stevenson, *Highland Warrior*, 70; Macinnes, *Clanship, Commerce and the House of Stuart*, 95-6.

<sup>75</sup> As quoted in Ohlmeyer, *Civil War and Restoration*, 79.



1639. The commissions appointed Antrim and MacDonald of Sleat “conjunctlie and severallie” as his Majesty’s Lieutenants and Commissioners in the Western Highlands and Isles, with full power to convocate the lieges, and pursue the King’s “rebellious” subjects with fire and sword. In exchange for their service, Charles promised to the Earl of Antrim the land of Kintyre and to MacDonald of Sleat the lands of Ardnamurchan, Strathordale and the islands of Rhum, Muck and Canna from the expected forfeiture of Argyll and his accomplice the Clan MacKinnon at the end of the war.<sup>76</sup> The commission was later expanded on dictating that Sleat would unite the Clan Donald in Scotland, specifically the MacDonalds of Glengarry and Clanranald, while Antrim sent an army of about 10,000 to England to join Charles and about 3,000 to the Western Highlands to join with the MacDonalds.<sup>77</sup> Although Glengarry and Clanranald were ready to join the Royalist forces, the troops to be raised by Antrim were not.

Unfortunately, for the Royalists, Antrim faced severe difficulty in fulfilling his promises to Charles, primarily in the number of men he could muster and the amount of funds he could raise for the expedition. Antrim’s problems with meeting his quota were exposed by his rival Viscount Wentworth, Lord Deputy of Ireland. Since Antrim’s ascendancy within Charles’s court, Wentworth became increasingly disapproving of both Antrim personally and of his actions; he was fond of “Neither his activities, nor his methods, nor the case with which he moved at court”.<sup>78</sup> Furthermore, Wentworth believed Antrim’s plan could prove to be counter-productive and could result in a pre-emptive strike on Ulster from the Scots Army and doubted that the 2,000 foot and 1,000 horse of the Irish Confederate Army could stop an invasion, especially since invading Scots would get aid from Presbyterians in Ulster.<sup>79</sup> The hostility with which Wentworth treated Antrim grew to such an extent that Charles wrote to Wentworth in January 1639 instructing him to put aside

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<sup>76</sup> Macdonald & Macdonald, *The Clan Donald*, ii, 720 & iii, 56; Stevenson, *Highland Warrior*, 71.

<sup>77</sup> D. Stevenson, *King or Covenant? Voices from the Civil War* (East Linton, 1996), 140; J. Lowe, “The Earl of Antrim and Irish Aid to Montrose in 1644”, *Irish Sword*, IV (1959-60), 191-198, at p. 193.

<sup>78</sup> A. Clarke, “The Earl of Antrim and the First Bishops’ War”, *Irish Sword*, VI (1962-3), 108-115, at p. 110.

<sup>79</sup> W. Kelly, “James Butler, twelfth Earl of Ormond, the Irish Government and the Bishops’ Wars 1638-40”, in J. Young (ed.), *Celtic Dimensions of the British Civil Wars* (Edinburgh, 1997), 36; Ohlmeyer, *Civil War and Restoration*, 81.



their differences and to supply Antrim with what he needs, "For he may be of much use to me at this time to shake loose upon the earl of Argyll".<sup>80</sup>

It took almost four years for Charles to finally be able to unleash Antrim on the Campbells of Argyll. According to Charles's missive to Antrim, "You are further to persuade our Catholic subjects to lend for our service two thousand men well armed, to be transported...into the Islands of Scotland and the Highlands; where you are to excite your party to rise with you to fall upon the Marquis of Argyle's country".<sup>81</sup> The orders specified that the 2,000 men were to be divided into three regiments and placed under the command of Alasdair MacColla. This time Antrim's mustering proved successful; he was able to raise the 2,000 men primarily from among his own tenants and neighbors. The first attempted sailing by MacColla with his 2,000 fighting Irish was halted by a severe storm that forced them back to port; however, once the ships and men had recovered the invasion party, reduced to 1,600 armed soldiers because of lack of provisions, left Ireland on 27 June 1644 bound for the isles of Scotland.

While the royalist party was preparing its invasion of Scotland from Ireland and England, Charles I's attempts to end the Covenant Movement were greatly improved with the addition of James Graham, Marquis of Montrose to the royalist faction. Montrose had been one of the leaders in the early stages of the Covenant Movement, but he broke rank in response to the actions of the Marquis of Argyll. Prior to Montrose's departure from the Covenanting regime, Montrose was attempting to guide the Covenanters along a moderate line that resulted in a power struggle between Argyll and Montrose. Montrose and other moderate Covenanters were becoming increasingly suspicious of Argyll's actions and believed, as have many historians, that Argyll acted only to increase his own and his clan's power rather than out of a devotion to the Covenant.<sup>82</sup> Furthermore, rumors that Argyll

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<sup>80</sup> As quoted in Clarke, "Earl of Antrim", 111; Fissell, *The Bishops' Wars*, 168.

<sup>81</sup> As quoted in C. Danachair, "Montrose's Irish Regiments", *Irish Sword*, IV (1959-60), 61-67, at p. 61; Ohlmeyer, *Civil War and Restoration*, 130.

<sup>82</sup> In A. Macinnes, "Gaelic culture in the seventeenth century: polarization and assimilation", in S. Ellis & S. Barber (eds.), *Conquest and Union: Fashioning a British State, 1485-1725* (New York, 1995), 173, Allan Macinnes states that "clans were reacting against powerful noble houses, pre-eminently the Campbells of Argyll and the Gordons of Sutherland, whose public espousal of the Covenanting cause cloaked their private territorial ambitions".



intended to depose the king prompted Montrose to become a Covenanting royalist.<sup>83</sup> Montrose believed in the National Covenant but was opposed to the direction Argyll was leading the regime under the Solemn League and Covenant of 1643, especially the rumored attacks on the monarch.

#### IV

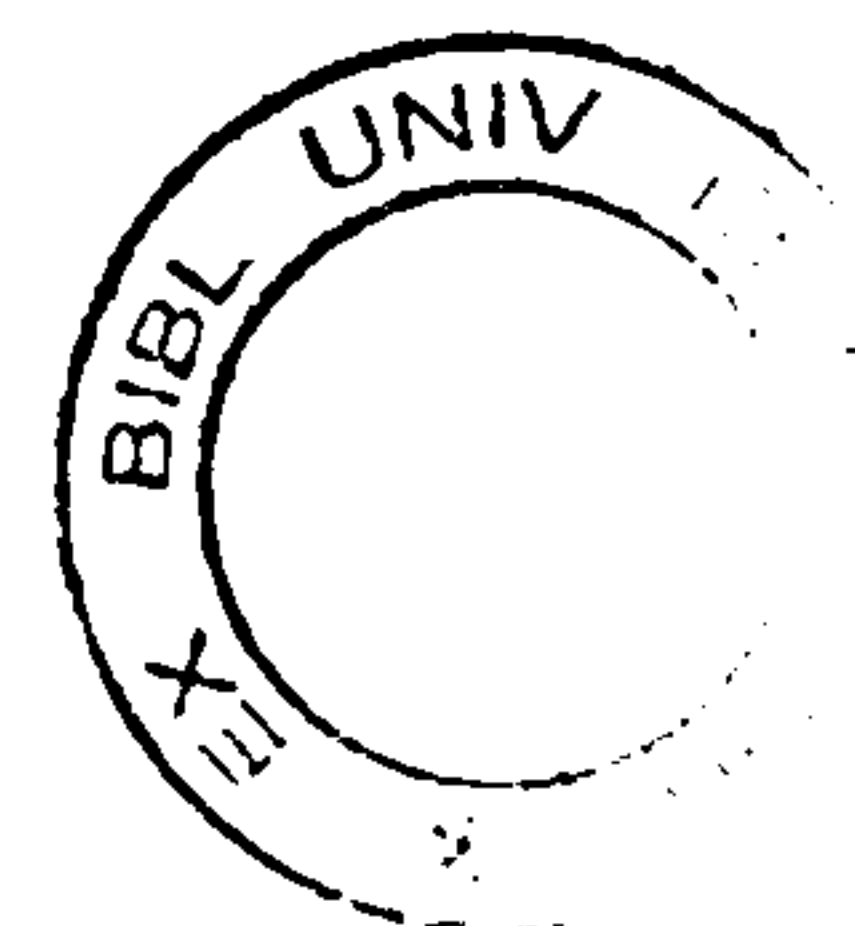
Thair is certane adverteisment come from the committie of warre within the shereffdome of Argyll that Alex[ande]r mcdonald sounne to [Colkitto] is come from Ireland to the yles of this kingdome and by said shereffdome of Argyll with three hundreth of the rebellious irisches all papists armed and provydeit with all part of hostill provisioun ...and that Rannald makdonald brother to the said Alex[ande]r is to follow eftir with shipping and greater number of these godless and rebellious miscreants.<sup>84</sup>

The arrival of the Irish contingent under the leadership of Alasdair MacColla led to the royalist victories between 1644 and 1645. The involvement of MacColla in the Scottish Revolution was driven by his desire for revenge against the Marquis of Argyll and the whole Clan Campbell rather than a devotion to the royalist cause. As Prof. David Stevenson cleverly summarizes, MacColla “probably didn’t give a damn about the king”;<sup>85</sup> however, the ferocity he and his men fought with was vital to the temporary royalist supremacy. MacColla’s personal hatred for Argyll originated in Argyll’s seizure of Colonsay from MacColla’s family and the subsequent imprisonment of Colla Ciotach, MacColla’s father. According to the “Supplication by Argyll anent maintenance of MacDonalds” submitted on 25 January 1642, Argyll had apprehended Colla Ciotach and two of his sons, John and Angus, for not finding caution to answer criminal charges for their involvement in the rebellion on Islay in 1616. Argyll’s supplication was submitted due to intelligence received that Colla Ciotach’s two other sons, Alasdair and Randal, with their followers had joined the Irish Confederates, thus posing a threat to the Clan Campbell. Finding that a definite threat of invasion existed, the Privy Council

<sup>83</sup> For details of the rumor, especially the intelligence report provided to Montrose and the Earl of Atholl, see Stevenson, *Scottish Revolution*, 200.

<sup>84</sup> NAS, Parliamentary Papers, PA11/1/64r-v.

<sup>85</sup> Stevenson, *King or Covenant?*, 140.





ordered Argyll to continue to hold Colla Ciotach and his sons at the expense of the crown in order to prevent them from joining in the fray.<sup>86</sup>

Unfortunately for the Covenanters the continued imprisonment of Alasdair MacColla's father and brothers only served to heighten MacColla's hostility toward Clan Campbell. MacColla's first attack on Argyll began in November 1643 with a raid on the western seaboard. In an attempt to defeat the invasion, Argyll deputized John Campbell of Ardkinglass to muster 600 men, to which Ardkinglass added 500 more from his own estate, to fight off MacColla and his associates. Outnumbered by the forces under Ardkinglass, MacColla and his men were forced to take refuge on the Isle of Mull before fleeing to Ireland. However, MacColla apparently left some men on Rathlin Isle who were later pursued by Ardkinglass in May 1644. Ardkinglass continued his attack on the remaining rebels when they arrived on Islay and Jura and had proceeded to raid the islands. In the end, 115 of MacColla's men were killed but none were taken prisoner.<sup>87</sup> Although the raid was completely "freelance" and was defeated by Ardkinglass, the association between MacColla and the Confederates gave further credit to the supposed Antrim Plot and heightened the fears of a full scale invasion of the western seaboard from Ireland.

Once back in Ireland, MacColla accepted a commission to lead an Irish force provided by the Earl of Antrim in a second invasion of Scotland with the intention of joining forces with the royalist army of the Marquis of Montrose. In the summer of 1644 MacColla returned to Scotland with 3,000 Irishmen, primarily from Antrim, and was surprisingly faced with difficulty in recruiting more men from the west coast of Scotland. Some clan chiefs on the western seaboard deliberately blocked recruiting attempts by MacColla after he arrived in Ardnamurchan and the clans in the central Highlands attempted to block his march into Speyside. The opposition faced by MacColla was largely due to the number of Irishmen in his army, as many clans were hesitant to align with members of the Irish Confederacy who were already at odds with central government and MacDonald of Sleat and the Earl of Seaforth were both skeptical of the possibility of victory.<sup>88</sup> However, the eventual rendezvous with Montrose ensured military viability, as MacColla needed the

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<sup>86</sup> *RPC*, 2<sup>nd</sup> series, vii, 185.

<sup>87</sup> Stevenson, *Highland Warrior*, 99-101.

<sup>88</sup> Stevenson, *Highland Warrior*, 112-3.



Scottish contingent under Montrose to legitimize his army and provide “a veneer of respectability in the eyes of the royalists”.<sup>89</sup>

Prior to the arrival of the Irish forces under MacColla, Montrose had been struggling to form a competent army to defeat the Covenanters. The addition of MacColla ensured royalist victories between 1644 and 1645 due to his military tactics and character. When Montrose and MacColla finally rendezvoused in Atholl in 1644 Montrose’s forces were roughly 300 men raised in Atholl while MacColla brought about 1600 Irishmen, the remainder being left in the Isles.<sup>90</sup> Over the course of Montrose and MacColla’s campaign the composition of their Royalist army was relatively fluid with only a small contingent making up any form of a standing army. As was often the case with the clansmen’s involvement in the royalist victories, a large number of men would return to their homes after each battle to deliver the booty they had acquired then return to their ranks for the next battle.<sup>91</sup>

Although there appears to be no surviving muster records from Montrose and MacColla, if such records were even kept, some rough estimates can be made as to the number of men and subsequent level of involvement of the clans of the Western Highlands and Isles by compiling any mentions made in the numerous primary and secondary histories of the period. What emerges is that the number of men recruited from the Western Highlands and Isles made up at least half of the royalist army at the various pitched battles and the majority of MacColla’s forces when he pillaged Argyllshire. As early as October 1644 MacColla was able to recruit approximately 1,500 men from the Isles and western seaboard with the support of Clanranald, MacDonald of Glengarry, MacDonald of Keppoch, Stewart of Appin, and the MacIans.<sup>92</sup> By the time Montrose and MacColla reached Inverlochy their army was

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<sup>89</sup> Stevenson, *Highland Warrior*, 121.

<sup>90</sup> C. Danachair, “Montrose’s Irish Regiments” in *Irish Sword* iv (1959-60), 61-67, at p.61; G. Hill, *An Historical Account of the Macdonnells of Antrim* (Belfast, 1873), 80; Stevenson, *Highland Warrior*, 106.

<sup>91</sup> M. MacLaren of MacLaren, *The MacLarens: A History of Clan Labhran* (Norfolk, ND), 61.

<sup>92</sup> G. Wishart, *The History of the Kings Majesties affairs in Scotland under the conduct of the most Honourable James Marques of Montrose, Earl of Kincardin, etc. and generall governour of that kingdome In the yers 1644, 1645 & 1646* Wing, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. W3120, 59; Anon., *A true relation of the happy success of His Majesties forces in Scotland under the conduct of Lord James Marquisse of Montrose His Excellencie, against the rebels there* Wing, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. T2964, 12; E. Furgol, “The Civil Wars in Scotland” in J. Kenyon & J. Ohlmeyer (eds.), *The Civil Wars: A Military History of England*,



a little over 3,000 fighting men and was about fifty percent clansmen from the Western Highlands and Isles.<sup>93</sup> It was at the battle of Inverlochy that the MacLeans came out in support of the Royalist cause although it would not be until after the battle that all of MacLean's able bodied men arrived.

MacColla's second recruiting mission in July 1645 resulted in an estimated 1,500 more men being added to his forces. During this period a number of Irishmen began to desert the small standing army that MacColla maintained but this was compensated for by Clanranald sending close to 500 men who had not already been put in arms while MacLean of Duart armed another 700 men. The remainder of the men recruited were small contingents sent by MacDonald of Glengarry, Stewart of Appin, the MacNabs, and the MacGregors.<sup>94</sup> The additional forces raised by MacColla resulted in the total armed forces of Montrose and MacColla reaching nearly 5,000 men at the battle of Kilsyth, close to 2,000 of which Montrose had mustered with the help of Lord Ogilvie and Gordon of Aboyne from the central Highlands.<sup>95</sup>

The departure of Alasdair MacColla following the royalist victory at Kilsyth on 15 August 1645 and subsequent absence from the battle at Philiphaugh on 13 September indicates that the Royalist victories were the result of the Irish regiments and the clans of the Western Highland and Isles' involvement in the royalist army. After Kilsyth MacColla requested permission from Montrose to return to Argyll because he had received word that the Marquis of Argyll was harassing his kinsmen. After being knighted by Montrose, MacColla was allowed to return to the Western Highlands. Once in Argyllshire, MacColla and his regiments raided and destroyed various Campbell lands as retribution for Argyll's attacks on the Clan Donald. The reports of the number of men MacColla took with him to Argyllshire vary anywhere between 3,000 and 500 men.<sup>96</sup> However, when MacColla's forces are examined at

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*Scotland, and Ireland 1638-1660* (Oxford, 1998), 55; Macdonald & Macdonald, *The Clan Donald*, ii, 333; Stevenson, *Highland Warrior*, 140-1.

<sup>93</sup> G. Wishart, *The memoirs of James marquis of Montrose* (London, 1903), 79; J. Spalding, *Memorials of the troubles in Scotland*, 2vols (Aberdeen, 1792), ii, 430; A. Mackenzie, *History of the Camerons; with genealogies of the Principal Families of the name* (Inverness, 1884), 92.

<sup>94</sup> Anon., *A true relation of the happy success*, 12; Wishart, *History of the Kings Majesties affairs*, 98; Wishart, *Memoirs*, 114-22.

<sup>95</sup> Stevenson, *Highland Warrior*, 200.

<sup>96</sup> Wishart, *History of the Kings Majesties affairs*, 126; Wishart, *Memoirs*, 137-8; Stevenson, *Highland Warrior*, 207-8.



the time he joined forces with Sir James Lamont it appears he had taken about 1,000 men. Early in September the combined forces were 2,000 men with Lamont mustering among his kin and friends in Cowal, Argyll, Lorne and Kintyre. Sometime in September the MacDougalls also raised 500 men to join the attacks on the Clan Campbell. By the end of MacColla's campaign there were anywhere between 1,000 and 1,400 men raiding Kintyre in May 1647.<sup>97</sup> Oral tradition records one particularly brutal incident, known as the "Barn of Bones". As the story is told, after a raid on a small Campbell village in Argyllshire, MacColla and his men filled a nearby barn with Campbell women and children then lit the barn on fire.<sup>98</sup> The facts regarding this situation can be challenged, but the brutality of MacColla and his regiment is unquestionable due to reports of post-battle massacres recorded by both Covenanters and royalists. MacColla's actions in Argyll clearly illustrate that he was more concerned with revenge against Argyll than with the royalist platform.

One of the keys to the military success of the royalist campaign under Montrose and MacColla was the strategic use of the "Highland charge". Alasdair MacColla has been credited with the success of the Highland charge as the first written record of its use was during MacColla's victory at the Battle of Langey in Ireland in February 1642, although there are indications that it was possibly a tactic he learned from the Irish Confederates. In the Highland charge, the Highlanders took the initiative by firing the first volley then waited for the enemy to counter volley. Once the enemy had fired, the Highlanders would then lay down their guns and charge with sword and targe while the enemy reloaded, thus catching the opposition off guard.<sup>99</sup> In addition to the military strategy that MacColla brought to the royalist army, the details of the Irish regiments' actions in Scotland indicate he brought with him soldiers of remarkable stamina and endurance. It is reported that 600 men were on their feet for close to forty-eight hours marching over 60 miles and were still able to defeat a cavalry attack at Dundee. The Irish stamina can also be seen in their 40 mile march from Kilcummin over Glen Roy and the shoulder of Ben Nevis

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<sup>97</sup> N. Lamont (ed.), *An Inventory of Lamont Papers* (Edinburgh, 1914), 230-1; H. McKechnie, *The Lamont Clan* (Edinburgh, 1938), 169-74; Stevenson, *Highland Warrior*, 214-32.

<sup>98</sup> C. Carlton, "Civilians" in Kenyon & Ohlmeyer, (eds.), *The Civil Wars*, 277.

<sup>99</sup> Stevenson, *Highland Warrior*, 82-3; Stevenson, *King or Covenant?*, 138; E. Furgol, "The Civil Wars in Scotland" in J.P. Kenyon & J. Ohlmeyer (eds.), *The Civil Wars: A Military History of England, Scotland and Ireland: 1638-1660* (Oxford, 1998), 57-58.



through heavy frost and snow after which they were still able to join in the defeat of Argyll at the battle of Inverlochy. Even when faced with armies superior in number, as was the case in almost every battle fought in Scotland between 1644 and 1645, the Irish were reported to possess an unquestionable level of courage and high morale and “never flinched” when faced with adversity.<sup>100</sup> The combination of the surprise tactic of the Highland charge, the character of the Irish soldiers, and the resolve of the clans of the Western Highlands and Isles formed the backbone of the royalists’ army, which resulted in the loss of no more than eight to nine hundred of Montrose’s men while the enemy forces suffered between twelve and fourteen thousand casualties.<sup>101</sup>

The subsequent defeat of Montrose at Philiphaugh indicates who the real military leader of the royalist army was. With MacColla and the bulk of the Highlanders, mostly MacDonalds, and the Irish regiments in Argyllshire, Montrose’s forces were sufficiently destroyed and suffered a severe post-battle massacre. Without the strength of the Highlanders and MacColla’s military tactics, Montrose’s army lacked the resources to effectively cope with the overwhelming Covenant forces. After Montrose was defeated the Covenant army chased the retreating royalists and executed the majority of those caught. Due to the notorious actions of the Irish, those still with Montrose bore the brunt of the casualties. According to the Covenanters’ propaganda, the battle of Philiphaugh resulted in the death of one to three thousand royalists. Although Montrose reported to Charles that he only lost two hundred men this total probably excluded those executed upon surrendering.<sup>102</sup> The battle of Philiphaugh effectively turned the tides of war in favor of the Covenanters, because without MacColla, Montrose’s army was unable to regain its composure and could no longer dominate the conflict. Ultimately, Montrose lacked the ability to inspire the clans to regroup for the next confrontation because his emphasis was directed towards the royalist cause whereas MacColla’s was aimed specifically at destroying the Clan Campbell.

Due to the number of clansmen who did not return to Montrose’s ranks and the large number of men lost at the battle of Philiphaugh, Montrose marched the

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<sup>100</sup> Danachair, “Montrose’s Irish Regiment”, 62.

<sup>101</sup> Danachair, “Montrose’s Irish Regiment”, 61-2.

<sup>102</sup> Cowan, *Montrose*, 232.



remnants of his army north into Mackenzie territory in an attempt to recruit troops at the beginning of 1646. Although George Mackenzie, Earl of Seaforth, raised his men and sent word to neighbors to do the same, the only one who joined was Sir James MacDonald of Sleat. Aided by the forces of Seaforth and MacDonald of Sleat, Montrose led his penultimate campaign and besieged Inverness. Responding to the siege, the Covenanters sent orders to General Middleton, who was serving in the Scots Army in England, to march north with 1,000 horse and 800 foot. Outnumbered by Middleton's army, Montrose was forced to lift the siege and fled with Seaforth and MacDonald to the hills of Strathglass. Faced with temporary defeat, Montrose boarded a ship in the harbor of Montrose and left Scotland with a handful of associates. With Montrose gone MacDonald of Sleat returned home and was pardoned by the Committee of Estates on the condition he did not raise in arms again. Seaforth, on the other hand, continued his royalist actions until 1648, leading 4,000 men in the Earl of Lanark's ranks and, after a failed negotiation with the Committee of Estates and the Church to get back in their good graces, fled to Holland in 1649 where he was appointed Principal Secretary of State under Charles II.

Surprisingly, the counter attacks of the Covenanters were not as widespread as one would anticipate. Due to the devastation caused by Alasdair MacColla and Montrose, throughout much of Scotland, the Covenanters were more concerned with providing relief to those affected by the brutality of the Royalist Army and opted to offer pardons to those Royalists who agreed to lay down their weapons and return to their homes peacefully rather than attempt to continue a full-scale military campaign against them.<sup>103</sup> One such pardon was given to Sir James MacDonald of Sleat in a declaration from the Committee of Estates that confirmed the offer of immunity and pardon for his clan's involvement in the "rebellion" given by Middleton on 12 August 1648.<sup>104</sup> However, those who chose to continue in the active support of the royalist cause did face severe consequences.

The reprisal devastation by the Covenanters against the steadfast remnants of the royalists in the Western Highlands and Isles began almost immediately after the

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<sup>103</sup> See chapter 3 "Central Government and the Western Highlands and Isles" for details of the policies of the Covenanters after the royalist victories.

<sup>104</sup> Clan Donald Trust, MacDonald of Sleat Papers, GD221/5032/8.



battle of Philiphaugh. After the massacre of royalists at Slain Man's Lea near Newark Castle, the Covenant Army began forcefully removing the strongholds of the royalist opposition. Although isolated incidents, the facts surrounding the surrender of Sir Lachlan MacLean of Duart's castles on Mull and the surrender of Dunaverty Castle by the MacDougalls provide two clear illustrations that MacColla was not the only one capable of committing bloody atrocities. After surrendering his castles and handing over his son as hostage for his future behavior, MacLean of Duart was forced to give in to demands that he turn over fourteen Irish soldiers who had taken refuge with him. All fourteen soldiers were immediately executed. However, the most shocking action taken against the royalists was the massacre at the surrendering of Dunaverty Castle in June 1647. At his departure, Alasdair MacColla had left three hundred MacDougalls to garrison Dunaverty Castle. After an extended siege by the Covenant Army under the command of Lt. Col. David Leslie, the MacDougalls were forced to negotiate a surrender. However, at the instigation of two Presbyterian zealots, all MacDougalls were slaughtered upon surrender. The actions of the zealots mirrored those of MacColla by provoking a "slaughter under trust", meaning the MacDougalls surrendered on the promise of the safety of their person but instead were killed when they exited the castle.<sup>105</sup> Although devastating, it must be stressed that this was not the norm for the Covenanters' policies in the wake of the victories of Montrose and MacColla. The departure of Alasdair MacColla, and later of Montrose, left the clans of the Western Highlands and Isles without much by way of strong leadership; thus, a large proportion of the clans ceased their attacks on the Clan Campbell and peacefully returned to their homes.

Furthermore, the lack of involvement in the "Engagement" of 1647-8 on the part of the clans greatly contributed to reducing the number of blatant attacks on royalists in the area. In 1648 the Covenant regime was faced with an uprising of royalists and moderate Covenanters who were opposed to the imprisonment of Charles I. The "Engagers", as they were termed, felt that the regime had gone too far in its attack on the monarchy and plotted to free Charles from captivity. Because the majority of support for the royalist cause in the Western Highlands and Isles was

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<sup>105</sup> Macinnes, *Clanship, Commerce and the House of Stuart*, 100.



the result of hostility towards the Clan Campbell and not out of devotion to the monarch, the actions of the “Engagers” offered little enticement to the clans to resume any military action. Furthermore, the weak political position of the “Engagers” meant that the clans would not be able to financially benefit from plundering the opposition as they had with Montrose and MacColla. Although the attempt to free Charles I failed, it diverted the Covenanters’ attention away from the Western Highlands and Isles and allowed many clansmen to resume their isolationist position, focusing again on local issues rather than national.

The link between Ranald MacDonnell, 2<sup>nd</sup> Earl of Antrim, and the clans of the Western Highlands and Isles brought the clans out onto the national stage. When the issues and events in the Western Highlands and Isles are put in the broader context of the Covenant Movement what emerges is that the events in the region prior to the movement and the issues that were at the heart of the matter for the clans had an enormous amount to do with the actions of Clan Campbell. During the dispute over the possession of Islay between the MacDonalds and the MacLeans numerous alliances and rivalries were formed with nearly every clan in the region taking a side, but the manipulative actions of Argyll in his acquisition of Kintyre and Islay realigned those allegiances. Clearly the MacDonalds would be angered by losing another piece of the former Lordship of the Isles to Argyll, but Argyll’s affront to MacLean, who was considered a close ally, led the clan to align with the Royalist army when the opportunity to thwart the Clan Campbell presented itself. While a number of clans were recovering from the Islay rebellion and having to adjust to all of the legal ramifications, primarily the 1616 Regulations, Argyll again caused tempers to rise in response to his appointment as Justiciar for Argyll and the Isles. After years of dispute before the Privy Council over the location of the courts for the Isles the clans, citing legal text dating back centuries, lost their case and Argyll was re-granted powers in the region that were second only to the king. Therefore, the long history of Clan Campbell domination in the region was magnified by the recent actions of the 7<sup>th</sup> earl and Lord Lorne. This resulted in a heightened sense of animosity towards the Clan Campbell which would manifest into outright anti-Campbell sentiment by the time MacColla arrived to unite the clans. As seen in the numbers and names of those who joined the Royalist forces

and the atrocities they carried out in Argyllshire, support for the monarch was the result of the opportunity afforded to the clans to wreak havoc on the Earl of Argyll and the Clan Campbell network. Thus, once the prospect of destroying the Campbell network departed with Alasdair MacColla the involvement of the clans of the Western Highlands and Isles dramatically decreased.



## **Chapter 3**

### **The Western Highlands and Isles' Place in the British Kingdom: Colonialism or State Formation?**

The purpose of this chapter is to determine whether the relationship between the crown and the Western Highlands and Isles, as well as the region's relationship with the Church of Scotland, was unique or typical in comparison to other regions within the British kingdom. As will be seen in the following chapters, the relationship between these entities was unstable, swinging from cooperation in some cases to complete disregard in others. In order to answer this question an understanding of the early modern process of state expansion is essential, primarily the processes of internal colonialism and state formation as employed by the English crown in Ireland and Wales respectively.

Although the Western Highlands and Isles was not a kingdom, it was a region somewhat autonomous from central government and culturally at odds with the ideals of the state. The varying constitutional statuses of the Western Highlands and Isles, Ireland, and Wales are not as significant as the similarities of all three regions in their cultural differences from the English crown. Direct correlations can be drawn between the position of the chiefs of the Western Highlands and Isles and their counterparts in Ireland and Wales, namely the Gaelic lords and Old English of Ireland and the Marcher lords in Wales. As kingdoms are a composition of the collective peoples it was imperative for the state to address the inhabitants in order to gain control of the region or kingdom. Analysis of the English crown's dealings with the indigenous political structures, religion, and vernacular languages of all three regions shows that although the Western Highlands and Isles was not a kingdom in its own right this point does not make it exempt from the crown's enacting of policies previously deemed beneficial in the kingdom of Ireland and in Wales through which they were able to subdue the people and thus integrate the region.

Using the theoretical models of internal colonialism as proposed by Michael Hechter and of state formation formulated by Michael Braddick the government and religious policies enacted in Ireland and Wales can be classified into these two

models. By analyzing the relationships between the crown and Ireland and Wales comparisons can be drawn to the relationship between the crown and the Western Highlands and Isles allowing for the region to be loosely placed within the theoretical models of Hechter and Braddick. What will be seen is that both styles of governing are evident in central government's policies in regards to the Western Highlands and Isles. The failure to colonize gave rise to state formation practices; however, the breakdown of both programs led to an increase in local politics which would greatly affect the development of allegiances during the Civil Wars.

## I

The theoretical model of internal colonialism was first discussed in British political history by Michael Hechter in *Internal Colonialism: The Celtic Fringe in British National Development*.<sup>1</sup> According to Hechter's definition of internal colonialism there are four main points to the model. The first point is that the core is seen to dominate politics and to exploit the resources of the peripheral region. The domination of the region results in an unequal distribution of power and resources. The second feature is the product of the core's need to stabilize and monopolize the region to its advantage which invariably includes the regulating of social roles. In order to maximize its power, the core instills a cultural division of labor through which it allocates those social and political roles deemed to be of high prestige to members of its own body politic, while positioning the indigenous members at the bottom of the stratification system. This preferential treatment contributes to the development of distinctive ethnic identifications through which the merging of cultures does not occur, because it is not in the best interests of the institutions of the core. The third feature of internal colonialism is that the economic development of the periphery is dependent on and complementary to the core. This aspect translates as the peripheral industrialization being highly specialized and geared toward export to the core. The dependency of the periphery is increased by its relative sensitivity to price fluctuations as an exporter and on the decisions of the core in regards to investment, credit, and wages. The last feature discussed by Hechter is the effect

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<sup>1</sup> M. Hechter, *Internal Colonialism: The Celtic Fringe in British National Development*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (New Brunswick, 1999).



which social stratification has on relations between the core and periphery. The social stratification imposed in the region creates the probability that the disadvantaged group, those being colonized, will eventually assert their own culture as equal or superior to that of the core and will give rise to the idea of a separate nation and seek independence.<sup>2</sup>

In an attempt to simplify the process of defining a colony, internal colony and a strictly peripheral region, Hechter gives five variables by which to rate the level of inclusion: (1) degree of administrative integration, (2) extensiveness of citizenship in the region, (3) prestige of the region's culture, (4) existence of geographical contiguity, (5) length of association between the periphery and core. According to Hechter's model, a colony, such as an overseas possession, will rank the lowest on all five variables while the internal colony will rank high on integration, citizenship, and geographical contiguity but low on length of association. The most autonomous region that will emerge from this exercise is the peripheral region which will rank the highest on all five variables.<sup>3</sup> In assessing the political histories of Wales and Ireland on this exercise Ireland ranks somewhere between a colony and an internal colony, while Wales clearly meets the requirements for a peripheral region. However, this is not the same conclusion that Hechter reaches. Through a series of over-simplifications and broad generalizations Hechter's findings place Ireland squarely in an internal colonial model while at the same time placing Wales in the same category. For the purpose of this study, however, we will take Hechter's internal colonialism approach to Ireland, but we have to highlight a few misconceptions which illustrate that Wales can not be classified in the same manner.

In all fairness to Prof. Hechter, it bears mentioning at this point that in the second edition of *Internal Colonialism* he included a revised introduction in which he acknowledges the criticism he received for his first edition, but does not change his position.<sup>4</sup> However, in the original introduction Hechter admitted that he does

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<sup>2</sup> Hechter, *Internal Colonialism*, 9-10 & 30-1.

<sup>3</sup> M. Hechter, *Internal Colonialism*, 349.

<sup>4</sup> Hechter's argument that Wales was incorporated through Internal Colonialism was effectively criticized by Ciaran Brady four years prior to Hechter's second edition; C. Brady, "Comparable Histories? Tudor Reformation in Wales and Ireland", in S. Barber & S. Ellis, eds., *Conquest and Union: Fashioning a British State, 1485-1725* (London, 1995), 66.



make generalizations and acknowledges the fact that historians may take exception with some of his work.<sup>5</sup> The generalizations and over-simplifications made regarding the politics within Wales indicate a manipulation of the historical facts which Dr. Hechter uses to fit Wales within the scope of his theoretical model and results in a number of half truths. For example, Hechter states that “The Act of Union itself forbade Welsh-speakers from office holding”,<sup>6</sup> which equates to his colonial feature of a “cultural division of labor” by excluding the indigenous members. The truth is that the “language clause” to which he is referring forbade the use of the Welsh language not the Welsh-speaker; Welsh-speakers were allowed to hold offices as long as they were bilingual in Welsh and English. Another misconception on the issue of language is the statement made on religious services: “For instance, despite the publication of a Welsh translation of the Bible in 1588, services in the Anglican Church of Wales continued to be given in English”.<sup>7</sup> Again, this is an over-simplification because, as will be discussed later, Bishop Bulkeley of Bangor and his successors instructed their clergy to employ both English and Welsh in their services, especially in giving the Catechism. The last point to be made may be considered semantics; however, it shows how Hechter already had his conclusion in mind when he created his model. In discussing the reign of Henry VIII, Hechter states that “Henry VIII had managed to conquer Wales during the early part of his reign”.<sup>8</sup> The problem with this statement is the word “conquer” because it does not take into account the series of petitions submitted to the king pleading for the extension of English common law: is it really conquering if they were pleading for inclusion? Due to the problems inherent in Hechter’s inclusion of Wales within his model of internal colonialism an investigation of the model of state formation is necessary.

Brendan Bradshaw explains early modern state formation as the assimilation of peripheral territories by Europe’s Renaissance monarchies which “strived to transmute feudal patrimonies into centralized unitary realms”. According to Bradshaw, Wales was on the path of assimilation alongside the rest of Europe while

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<sup>5</sup> M. Hechter, *Internal Colonialism*, 5-6.

<sup>6</sup> M. Hechter, *Internal Colonialism*, 74.

<sup>7</sup> M. Hechter, *Internal Colonialism*, 110.

<sup>8</sup> M. Hechter, *Internal Colonialism*, 102.



“Ireland’s intransigence made it an anomaly”.<sup>9</sup> The model of state formation formulated by Michael Braddick explains that this transmutation from patrimonies to unitary realms is based on the use of agents of state authority and claims that the expansion of the English state was due to the establishment of a network of offices which exercised political power. According to Braddick’s assessment of government officials, these officeholders had access to a distinctive kind of power which was territorially bounded but centrally coordinated. Local officeholders acted as intermediaries between governmental policy and local interests, while at the same time seeking legal validity for their own innovations through proposed local initiatives. This combination of roles allowed for an increase in local influence, and service in this capacity was regarded as a confirmation of social status. The use of government agents created a social hierarchy closely related to the political hierarchy. However, political power resided in the office, not the individual. As a result, when an individual lost office they often lost the power that went with it.<sup>10</sup> It is through the promotion of local elites to government agents that Braddick explains the expansion of English authority into Wales, Ireland, and the Highlands and Borders of Scotland.

According to Braddick, state formation was not a matter of central will or direction but was conducted through influential groups within the localities that called the state into action while also making use of legitimate authority to serve their interests. Because of these influential groups the process of state formation went hand in hand with the process of elite formation. Braddick explains that access to political power through office holding was integral to social status and that “social differentiation was reflected in, and compounded by, the distribution of political power”.<sup>11</sup> As a result, state formation was created out of a complex relationship between the needs of the crown and the social interests of the elites upon whom government depended. This duality of interests encouraged cooperation of the local elites and laid the foundation for stable government in the periphery.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> B. Bradshaw, “The Tudor Reformation and Revolution in Wales and Ireland: The Origins of the British Problem” in B. Bradshaw & J. Morrill, eds., *The British Problem c.1534-1707: State Formation in the Atlantic Archipelago* (London, 1996), 42.

<sup>10</sup> M. Braddick, *State Formation in Early Modern England, c.1550-1700* (Cambridge, 2000), ch.1.

<sup>11</sup> M. Braddick, *State Formation*, 337.

<sup>12</sup> M. Braddick, *State Formation*, 338.



The discussion of Welsh politics put forward by Michael Braddick clearly summarizes his model of state formation through assimilation and claims that the reason for its long term success in Wales was the mutual benefits afforded to the crown and the local elites. Braddick's first point is that the increasing authority of the crown came in tandem with the spread of government through magistrate offices which created a mutuality of interests between the crown and the elites. This meant that the crown gained authority while at the same time the local elites gained status and economic benefits. Furthermore, the social and commercial ties which arose from the union bound the Welsh gentry more closely to London, the Inns of Court, and universities. The closer contact with these types of institutions meant that elites were exposed to government interests at the same time that institutions of royal government were providing the means to cement local social status and resolutions of local conflicts. Again, this represented a mutuality of interests and benefits for both the crown and the gentry; Welsh gentry would become proponents of government issues while government became proponents of local issues. Lastly, Braddick points out that the integration of the Welsh gentry did not come at the expense of local identity. The assimilation of Wales was not dependent on the cooperation of the population below the gentry and the persistence of linguistic differences among the Welsh peasantry did not prevent the adoption of the shire system.<sup>13</sup> While Braddick's model of state formation based on the employment of local elites as government agents adequately accounts for the policies of assimilation in Wales, like Michael Hechter, there are problems with including the other extreme of the political spectrum, chiefly the plantation of Ireland.

Michael Braddick's discussion of "The Failure of the Kingdom of Ireland", a subheading he himself uses,<sup>14</sup> emphasizes that Tudor policies in Ireland were a "concerted attempt to create a sister kingdom that foundered on the failure of the Reformation",<sup>15</sup> and, surprisingly, provides evidence contrary to his model of state formation. While it can be argued that assimilation was attempted for a short period during the reign of Henry VIII, its failure gave rise to a much longer period of colonization which dominates Irish political history. The authority of the early

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<sup>13</sup> M. Braddick, *State Formation*, 355.

<sup>14</sup> M. Braddick, *State Formation*, 379.

<sup>15</sup> M. Braddick, *State Formation*, 379.



Tudors was dependent on the cooperation of the Old English and leading Gaelic chieftains; however, both groups were unyielding to the efforts of the Reformation. The failure of the latter to take root in Ireland resulted in the natural governors, meaning the Old English and few leading chieftains, becoming increasingly alienated due to religious differences, a point which Braddick concedes. Due to the increasing perceived threat of foreign invasion in response to England's Reformation policies and the possibility of Ireland's participation in an attack from Spain or France, the attempts at tighter government control became associated with moral and religious claims. The government's solution to the problems posed by Ireland's autonomy was the creation of plantations which undermines Braddick's argument for mutuality of interests necessary for state formation. Braddick claims that the government's plantation scheme and "brutal intervention" was increasingly aimed at creating a new elite "more suitable for exercise of civil governance than the Gaelic or Old English elites".<sup>16</sup> The fact that the government was introducing a new group, commonly termed the New English, to dominate does not equate with Braddick's model of assimilation through the promotion of existing local elites to government agents, instead it provides evidence of domination along the lines of colonialism.

In order to determine how Michael Hechter's model of internal colonialism as implemented in Ireland and Michael Braddick's model of state formation executed in Wales can be applied to the Western Highlands and Isles an understanding of how these two models functioned in reality is essential. The following two sections provide discussions of the policies of state formation implemented in Wales and of the planting of colonies in Ireland, as well as the approach taken by their respective churches in dealing with the vernacular. The examination of Wales and Ireland is not intended to be a comprehensive study of their political histories, but through engagement with the secondary literature on the respective countries and through comparative works an overview of policies

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<sup>16</sup> M. Braddick, *State Formation*, 380. This is a similar conclusion to one reached by many historians although they rightly claimed this was an example of colonialism, such as R.F. Foster, Nicholas Canny, and Ciaran Brady. See R.F. Foster, *Modern Ireland, 1600-1972* (London, 1988); N. Canny, *Making Ireland British, 1580-1650* (Oxford, 2001); C. Brady, "The Decline of the Irish Kingdom" in M. Greengrass (ed.), *Conquest and Coalescence: The Shaping of the State in Early Modern Europe* (London, 1991).



emerges that adequately serve as indicators of internal colonialism and state formation. Therefore, it is through a general analysis of these two countries' politics and religion that the theoretical models will be illustrated. This analysis provides examples with which to compare the policies in the Western Highlands and Isles to establish central government's course of action in the region.

## II

The policies enacted in Wales during the 1530s follow Michael Braddick's theory of state formation through the assimilation of local elites and their promotion to government agents. The assimilation of Wales derived from the 1536 policies which were the end result of English rule over Wales. Between 1284 and 1536 English kings had become the largest Marcher lords through inheritance, purchase, attainder, escheat and in their capacity as Dukes of Lancaster which put Henry VIII in a position to obtain loyalty from other Marcher lords and lesser Welsh gentry. As a result, many Welsh gentry were conscious of their changed position and were eager to obtain a more legal status and take advantage of the political and economic opportunities available to them.

The establishment of the Council in the Marches was one of a number of institutions used by the crown to govern the furthest reaches of its realm. The Council was intended to exert royal authority and to promote order where royal influence was relatively weak.<sup>17</sup> The main problems within the administration of the Council were that its authority was not regularly enforced throughout the Marches, the officials on the Council were severely corrupt or negligent in their duties and went undisciplined, and criminals were often unpunished. The consequence of the unrest in the Marches resulting from the corruption and injustice of the region was the passing of a "Bill concerning the Council of Wales" in 1534-5. The bill outlined a number of remedies for the corruptions within the Council and represented a serious incursion into the autonomy of the Marches and its Council. The bill was passed due to the threat of a possible uprising of papists in Wales and of foreign

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<sup>17</sup> M. Jones, "Cultural Boundaries within the Tudor State: Bishop Rowland Lee and the Welsh Settlement of 1536", *The Welsh History Review* 20 (2000), 227-53, at p. 230.



invasion from France and Spain in reaction to Henry VIII's religious policies. Therefore, the bill included six measures intended to subdue hostilities and corruption in the region to protect against invasion: enforced court decisions, compensation for wrongful imprisonment at the rate of 6s 8d per day and punishment of officers who committed the imprisonment, prohibition of weapons at court or places of assembly, authorized English Justices of the Peace to extradite criminals taking refuge in the Marches, and directed fines on those who found sureties for good behavior to be paid to the king.<sup>18</sup>

The policies enacted during the reign of Henry VIII, primarily those of 1536, were intended to bring Welsh laws and institutions in line with those practiced in England. The instilling of uniformity within the king's dominions was considered highly desirable for any possibility of successful enforcement of the statutes passed by the Reformation Parliament. It was planned that the transformation of Wales was to coincide with the dissolution of monasteries resulting from the Reformation, and that the dissolution would create an enfranchised Welsh gentry who would be able to secure a share of the dissolved monastic lands. The newly enfranchised gentry were to emerge as Members of the Commons and as Justices of the Peace and would possess a vested interest in the success of the Henrican Reformation.<sup>19</sup>

As a result, specific points in the 1536 Act of Union were aimed at law and order, primarily against the "sinister usages and customs" of Wales. The act dictated that land inheritance was to be conducted on the English model of primogeniture, thus abolishing the Welsh practice of equal partition of the estate between all sons. It also abolished the Marcher lordships on the grounds of the high incidences of crime within them and because the king as the largest March lord held the majority of the lordships. The abolition of the lordships meant that lords could no longer try pleas of the crown and established the English shire system in their place. According to the act, the newly established shires in Wales were granted parliamentary representation and the members were to be paid wages. Lastly, the act dictated that all administrative and judicial business was to be conducted in the

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<sup>18</sup> G. Williams, *Renewal and Reformation*, 260.

<sup>19</sup> P. Roberts, "The English Crown, the Principality of Wales and the Council in the Marches, 1534-1641", in B. Bradshaw & J. Morrill eds., *The British Problem, c. 1534-1707: State Formation in the Atlantic Archipelago* (London, 1996), 122.



English language, no one using “the Welsh speech or language shall have or enjoy any manner of office...unless he or they use the English speech or language”.<sup>20</sup> The imposition of the act was not aimed at an unreceptive population, to the contrary the acts were in response to series of petitions sent by individuals and communities in north and central Wales. The administrative settlement outlined in the act formed part of a larger strategy for integration of peripheral areas of the realm.<sup>21</sup>

The subsequent 1543 Act for Certain Ordinances in the King’s Dominion and Principality, commonly referred to as the “Second Act of Union”, contained 130 clauses spelling out the arrangements for future administration and justice in Wales and expanded on the policies of the 1536 act. The act confirmed the creation of Welsh shires and delineated the establishment of hundreds within them. However, the most prominent feature of the act was that it established the Court of Great Sessions which was to act in “as large and ample manner” as King’s Bench, Court of Common Pleas, and Assize Courts. Accompanying the Court of Great Session was the power given to the Lord Chancellor to appoint for each county eight Justices of the Peace who would hold regular Quarter Sessions and the appointment of a sheriff in each county who was nominated by the Council of the Marches and chosen by the Privy Council.<sup>22</sup>

The desire of the Welsh gentry to be completely united with their English neighbors is clearly seen in a series of petitions to the king; one in particular was sent from the inhabitants of Montgomery in 1536. The petition claimed that the petitioners had “ever lived under the oppression of their lords and their officers” under customs “always applied and interpreted after the pleasure of the lord and his officers to their best profit” and craved to be “received and adopted into the same laws and privileges” enjoyed by the king’s English subjects wishing to be “united ourselves to the greater and better parts of the island”.<sup>23</sup> As a result of this petition and others of a similar tone, the Welsh gentry can be considered well disposed to the idea of a union. The Welsh gentry did not see union as a suppression of their community’s distinctive “rights, usages, law and custom”; rather they saw the

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<sup>20</sup> G. Williams, *Renewal and Reformation*, 268-9.

<sup>21</sup> P. Roberts, “The English Crown”, 123-4.

<sup>22</sup> G. Williams, *Renewal and Reformation*, 270-1.

<sup>23</sup> G. Williams, *Renewal and Reformation*, 265.



benefits of the extension to the Welsh of the “privileges and liberties” enjoyed by their English neighbors. Within these “privileges and liberties” were the extension of government by consent through parliamentary representation, open access to English common law which could be employed to secure vulnerable property titles, and an increase in the opportunities for status and profit through participation in local administration under the English shire system.<sup>24</sup> Furthermore, the Welsh gentry had a propensity toward patriotism to the Tudor regime due to the belief that the Tudors were the rightful heirs of Wales as lineal descendants of the ancient Britons. This belief resulted in their perception that the Tudor program for assimilation was directed toward the re-inauguration of the British kingdom and was aimed at liberating Wales from papal and Saxon oppression.<sup>25</sup> Even though few Tudor monarchs actually displayed any great affection for Wales, the idea that the Welsh held a special place in the hearts of the Tudor monarchs was a persistent and highly persuasive propaganda theme.<sup>26</sup>

The peacefulness of Wales following the union indicates that the program launched in 1536 was unproblematic from the start. There are no rebellions recorded between the union and the outbreak of the Civil Wars and the Welsh literati took to eulogizing the new dispensation.<sup>27</sup> Welsh allegiances during the Civil Wars were primarily to the Royalist cause. The reason for support for Charles I was that Wales was isolated from constitutional and religious disagreements due to the lack of a strong commercial interest and lack of Puritan conviction. Therefore, the region had no reason to break its ties with the monarch whom they still deemed to be the rightful king of the Britons through his supposed genealogical descendency to King Arthur.

In contrast to Wales, the overriding mentality of the government towards Ireland was for the complete abolition of Irish laws and practices and the establishment of a new elite to enforce direct rule from London. After the failure of Henry VIII's Kingship Act of 1541, there were few attempts made to integrate the local lords and more emphasis was placed on colonization, domination, and direct

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<sup>24</sup> B. Bradshaw, “The Tudor Reformation and Revolution”, 51.

<sup>25</sup> B. Bradshaw, “The Tudor Reformation and Revolution”, 52.

<sup>26</sup> C. Brady, “Comparable Histories?”, 68.

<sup>27</sup> B. Bradshaw, “The Tudor Reformation and Revolution”, 40.



rule through plantation schemes; thus, the practices enforced in Ireland follow the theoretical model of internal colonialism proposed by Michael Hechter.

The key source of trouble experienced throughout Irish political history was the decrease of royal authority and the process of “degeneracy” or “Gaelicization” of the early colonial communities that were originally intended to function as outposts of royal authority. The Gaelicized English, commonly known as the Old English, became local magnates through their networks of protection and patronage across the colonies and into the Gaelic regions and began to function independently of royal authority. To counteract the increasing power of the Old English over government affairs the policies of the Tudor regimes toward Ireland were intended to abolish the divide between the Englishries and Irishries and to extend English rule and administration throughout Ireland. An early measure taken was the Kingship Act of 1541, asserted by Henry VIII, which converted Ireland from a lordship to a kingdom under the direct authority of the English monarch. The act declared Henry VIII king over all inhabitants in Ireland and extended order and protection through royal justice in return for allegiance and obedience from the inhabitants. Although given the status of a kingdom, Ireland remained an English dependency with all policies for Ireland being determined by the monarch and council with little, if any, Irish voice in matters relating to Ireland. The dependency of Ireland meant that King’s Bench tried all Irish lawsuits on appeal, appointments of Irish ministers were made under the Great Seal of England, the Irish Parliament could not meet or pass legislation without warrant from the crown, and the English Parliament retained the right to legislate for Ireland even though the Irish did not have parliamentary representation. However, this act was near impossible to enforce. Ireland, at this point, was fragmented and unstable consisting of sixty lordships, both Old English and Gaelic, struggling for political dominance which resulted in chronic warfare and factionalism. The ineffectiveness of the act illustrates the gap between the intentions of Tudor policy and the reality it was faced with.<sup>28</sup>

The evolution of Tudor policies in Ireland constituted a piecemeal introduction of English law through the revitalization of central and provincial

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<sup>28</sup> C. Brady, “The Decline of the Irish Kingdom”, M. Greengrass ed., *Conquest and Coalescence: The Shaping of the State in Early Modern Europe* (London, 1991), 94.



government.<sup>29</sup> Under the rule of Elizabeth I, Irish policies drew on a wide range of medieval English political ideas which, through their enactment, gradually polarized the Old English from the New English, those settlers who constituted a second wave of colonialism and maintained their close connection to England and Protestantism. A number of policies were directed specifically at the indigenous Gaelic warlords in the hopes of transforming them into upstanding English noblemen while numerous policies were intended to attack the autonomy of the Old English. The establishment of English colonies originally introduced to control strategically important districts, such as in East Ulster between 1570 and 1573 and in Munster between 1584 and 1589, and the founding of regional councils in Connacht and Munster to oversee the administration of frontier regions resulted in mounting levels of unrest and rebellion among both the Gaelic lords and the Old English.

The plantation in Munster is a good example of an early colonial enterprise which was intended to lead the Irish toward civility through example. The plantation of Munster was a direct result of the rebellion of the Earl of Desmond in Munster which left the county in near ruin. The plantation was established as an instrument of royal policy and private enterprise aimed at re-creating a world of south-east England on the confiscated Munster estate of the Earl of Desmond. The grants of land in the plantation ranged from 4,000 to 12,000 acres and were given to thirty-five English landlords who were typically needy gentry hoping to make their fortune in Ireland and saw Munster as an avenue for social upward mobility. The grants were issued on the condition that the landlords vowed to introduce English colonists and to practice an English style agriculture based on grain-growing. Furthermore, all start up goods, such as grain, livestock and furnishings, were to be collected in England and transported to Munster.<sup>30</sup> By the end of the sixteenth century the Munster plantation could be considered a success. The plantation had roughly 12,000 settlers actively engaged in farming the land,<sup>31</sup> the raw material exports from Munster to England were performing impressively by the 1630s, and

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<sup>29</sup> J. Ohlmeyer, “‘Civilizing of those Rude Partes’: Colonization within Britain and Ireland, 1580-1640s”, in N. Canny, ed., *The Oxford History of the British Empire: The Origins of Empire, British Overseas Enterprise to the Close of the Seventeenth Century*, vol. 1 (Oxford, 1998), 133.

<sup>30</sup> N. Canny, *Making Ireland British, 1580-1650* (Oxford, 2001), 130.

<sup>31</sup> J. Ohlmeyer, “‘Civilizing of those Rude Partes’”, 137.



the fisheries trade was reportedly worth £29,000 in 1626.<sup>32</sup> Furthermore, Anglicization worked to a certain extent in the plantation; however, it involved more subtle changes with the settlers preferring the old Gaelic place names rather than adopting English names. The treatment of the natives in Munster followed its own pattern and circumvented the government's policies against the natives, allowing one-third of the native population to return to ownership of land by 1611. The prominence of the Irish resulted in a relaxation of attitudes toward the natives and Irish tenants who were the norm on the Boyle estate in Cork and in Bandon town. Unfortunately, the plantation in Ulster would vary drastically from the plantation in Munster and few allowances would be made for the inhabitants.

The Plantation scheme for Ireland between 1610 and 1622 was based on the proposal submitted by Sir Robert Jacob, solicitor general, and Mathew de Renzy, a German adventurer turned naturalized Englishman. Their scheme was based on the process of surrender and re-grant. This allowed those Irish lords who acknowledged the crown's superiority and surrendered their titles to be re-granted three quarters of their original estate and those lords who opposed the crown's superiority were only allowed to keep two-thirds of their estate. It was intended that colonization would take place by the establishment of Protestant proprietors on the portions of estates not re-granted to Irish lords, creating pockets of English settlers within the Gaelic regions. However, due to the crisis in Ulster, Viceroy Chichester recommended a modified form of colonization to be instituted in the region. Taking into account the Irish behavior during the Nine Years' War and the subsequent O'Doherty rebellion,<sup>33</sup> Chichester had little positive to say about the natives. His recommendation was for the complete forfeiture of the estates of Niall Garbh and Donal O'Cahan as main actors in the rebellion. However, he suggested provisions be made for lesser septs because he claimed it would prove "hard and almost impossible to displace them" and the septs of the Earl of Tyrone were "warlike people and many in number" who would "neither be ruled nor removed".<sup>34</sup> Chichester's recommendation was motivated by reality not generosity. He assumed

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<sup>32</sup> R.F. Foster, *Modern Ireland, 1600-1972* (London, 1989), 68.

<sup>33</sup> The O'Doherty rebellion in February 1608 was an uprising of lesser lords who believed they had been betrayed by the government when they were not granted portions of the estates of the Earls of Tyrone and Tyrconnell as compensation for their support of the government against the earls.

<sup>34</sup> As quoted in N. Canny, *Making Ireland British*, 191.



that plantation would rely on private investment of “well chosen undertakers” who would be captains and officers of the army who were to be “seated in the places of most danger and of the best advantage for His Majesty’s service and defence of the rest of the undertakers”.<sup>35</sup>

As a result of the Earls of Tyrone and Tyrconnell’s departure to the Continent, commonly known as the Flight of the Earls, and the O’Doherty rebellion, the crown was able to confiscate large tracts of land in Ulster and establish the largest plantation in Ireland. In contrast to the plantation of Munster, the allocations of land were in relatively small parcels, ranging from 1,000 to 2,000 acres. James VI and I granted the land to 100 Scottish and English undertakers and about fifty servitors who consisted primarily of English army officers who had settled in Ireland at the end of the Nine Years’ War. It was hoped that they would create a British type of rural society and were to set aside acres for civilizing institutions such as churches, towns, and schools to facilitate the new society. One stipulation added to the grants to the primary undertakers was that no Irish were to reside on their estate resulting in segregation and dislocation of many natives. However, along with the allocations to British settlers, allocations were also granted to 300 “deserving Irishmen” that allowed them to have native tenants in the hopes that they would have a vested interest in the settlement and the promotion of civility.<sup>36</sup> The problems with the plantation of Ulster were that segregation proved impractical and the grants were so large that the native Irish were rapidly accepted as rent-paying tenants in order to fulfill the obligations ordered in the grants, such as building and farming. A report on the types of colonists in Ulster also shows the problem in trying to found the colony. It was reported that the English settlers were generally “plain country gentlemen” who were tight-fisted but also easily scared away with many having already sold or exchanged their portions, while the Scots settlers were a tougher proposition but were too ready to lease land to the natives and to use them to supply their needs. It was hoped that the offers for land in Ulster would draw skilled and prosperous artisan settlers, but there was no incentive for them to leave

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<sup>35</sup> N. Canny, *Making Ireland British*, 192.

<sup>36</sup> J. Ohlmeyer, “Civilizing of those Rude Partes”, 138.



their established businesses and what the crown got instead was a mixture of rogues, vagabonds and opportunists.<sup>37</sup>

The overall effect of policies in Ireland through the Tudor and Stuart reigns was an increasing level of resentment that steadily escalated from violent protests, such as the Fitzgerald Rebellion in 1534-5 and the Geraldine League in 1539-40, to the Nine Years' War and eventual Civil Wars in the 1640s. The fact that Ireland was governed with English priorities and interests at heart meant that a large part of the strategy was Protestantization. In order to ease the burden of administering Ireland, the government preferred a Protestant population so that they were not dependent on cajoling the Catholic political classes. The heavy-handed colonization which was employed as a means of direct rule over Ireland and the preferment of Protestants sparked considerable resentment at its practical implications and raised the issue of religion to such a level that it proved to be one of the chief ideological motives for revolt.<sup>38</sup>

### III

Many nationalists have pointed to the 1536 Act of Union clause which dictated that all official business was to be conducted in English as an attempt by central government to abolish the Welsh language and thus the Welsh culture. In actuality the "language clause" makes no mention of the abolition of the Welsh language but calls for the inclusion of the English language within Wales when dealing with state business. As Peter Roberts explains, the "language clause" was not an attempt to exclude Welsh speakers or abolish the language, rather it was meant to be "an inducement to the Welsh to become bilingual". Furthermore, the nationalist claims have little merit because the clause was not strictly enforced and the need for vernacular scripture to promote the Reformation overrode the clause.<sup>39</sup>

The use of the Welsh vernacular in religion had its beginnings in 1542 under the authority of Bishop Bulkeley of Bangor. Even though there was a scarce amount

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<sup>37</sup> R.F. Foster, *Modern Ireland*, 67.

<sup>38</sup> B. Bradshaw, "The Tudor Reformation and Revolution", 41.

<sup>39</sup> P. Roberts, "The Welsh Language, English Law and Tudor Legislation", *Transactions of the Honourable Society of Cymmrodorion* (London, 1989), 19-75, at p. 28. For details of Roberts argument against nationalist claims see "The 'Act of Union' in Welsh History", *Transactions of the Honourable Society of Cymmrodorion* (London, 1974), 49-72.



of vernacular literary sources available at the time, Bishop Bulkeley ordered the clergy, schoolmasters, and heads of households under his charge to give religious instructions in the Welsh language. The use of the Welsh vernacular gained momentum through the increasing popularity of Tyndale's English New Testament and Cranmer's Liturgy, both of which were steadily undergoing partial translations in Wales. The increasing demand for Welsh literature resulted in Sir John Price of Brecon's publication, *Yny Lhyvyr Hwnn*, which was a straightforward religious primer and William Salesbury's translation of the epistles and gospels of the Prayer Book and substantial portions of scripture, *Kynniver Llith a Ban*.<sup>40</sup>

Following the success of Sir John Price's and William Salesbury's publications, the proposal for a publication of a Welsh Bible was promoted by Richard Davies, Bishop of St. Asaph, and William Salesbury in the hopes of saving the Welsh people from irreligion and Catholic superstition out of ignorance of the Word of God. Davies and Salesbury presented an anonymous petition to the crown for the Scripture to be translated and pleaded that Welsh and Cornish children be taught the Catechism in their native language.<sup>41</sup> Their efforts were met with royal approval and an act for the translation of the Bible was approved in 1563. The act dictated a short timeline for the completion of the work, provided official sanction, and included a specific mandate for the translations' use in parish worship. However, the act did not provide any financial support and had an added proviso from the House of Lords ordering the Welsh Bible to be placed alongside the English Bible to enable parishioners to learn English. The New Testament and Prayer Book were published in 1567 and it is estimated that 1,000 copies were printed. However, the translations did not provide a complete version of the Bible and garnered criticism due to the possibility of Salesbury's "linguistic idiosyncrasies".<sup>42</sup>

The issue of the Welsh Bible reemerged in 1587 at the instigation of John Penry. Penry was a staunch Puritan who criticized the church hierarchy for being responsible for the failure to produce a complete Welsh Bible. As a result, Archbishop Whitgift responded by increasing the publication of the translation

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<sup>40</sup> G. Williams, *Renewal and Reformation*, 295.

<sup>41</sup> G. Williams, *Renewal and Reformation*, 314.

<sup>42</sup> G. Williams, *Renewal and Reformation*, 315.



already in use while commissioning William Morgan to produce a complete version. Morgan's Bible was deemed more lucid and intelligible than Salesbury's translations and in September 1588 the Privy Council issued instructions to the Welsh bishops to ensure copies were purchased and employed by their clergy.<sup>43</sup> The completion of Morgan's Bible effectively completed the process of integration in Wales. A term often used by James VI in relation to the union between Scotland and England had its beginnings in the reign of Elizabeth and the union between Wales and England, the integration of the Welsh gentry into English politics and the inclusion of the Welsh language in the church meant that there was a clear union of "hearts and minds".

While the government and political aspects of Wales were undergoing the process of integration, so too was the church. As stated above, the use of the Welsh vernacular was essential to the success of the Reformation and overrode any implications in the 1536 Act of Union which could be construed as the call for the abolition of the Welsh language. It was believed that for assimilation to succeed adherence to the Reformation was crucial and meant that integration of the Welsh people into the Protestant faith was just as necessary as their integration into politics.

Similar to the attitude taken during the reign of Elizabeth I toward the Welsh vernacular, there was a shift in policy at roughly the same time in favor of the Irish vernacular out of necessity. Prior to this shift in attitude to the Irish vernacular, the Irish Act of Uniformity was issued in 1560 as an attempt to strengthen the Church of Ireland. The act which enforced the adherence to Protestantism had an added stipulation which permitted the church functionaries who did not know English to conduct their services in Latin. Although the use of the vernacular for scripture and public worship was one of the most significant features of the Protestant Reformation, no allowances were made for the vernacular to be used in Ireland. Royal officials in Dublin discarded the use of the vernacular inherent in the Reformation on the belief that the cultivation of Gaelic was disloyal to the crown and would slow the Gaelic speakers' Anglicization.<sup>44</sup> The continued use of the Gaelic language in Ireland was quickly becoming associated with Gaelic resistance

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<sup>43</sup> G. Williams, *Renewal and Reformation*, 322-3.

<sup>44</sup> M. MacCraith, "The Gaelic Reaction to the Reformation", in S. Barber & S. Ellis, eds., *Conquest and Union: Fashioning a British State, 1485-1725* (London, 1995), 140.



and eventually became synonymous with Catholicism. Surprisingly though, Trinity College in Dublin still allowed the Gaelic language although the ethos of the college was Elizabethan and Protestant.<sup>45</sup>

The shift in attitude toward the Irish vernacular was out of an effort to circumvent the continuing influence of Catholic clerics in Ireland. As a result of the Catholic threat, Elizabeth I reversed the government's position concerning the Irish language and commissioned a Gaelic version of the New Testament to be printed and circulated to the benefit of the Reformation. Elizabeth sent £66 13s 4d to Adam Loftus, Archbishop of Armagh, and Hugh Brady, Bishop of Meath, "for the making of character to print the New Testament in Irish";<sup>46</sup> by the end of 1567 there was still no translation and Elizabeth threatened to demand the money back. However, the Gaelic New Testament was finally completed in 1602 and was followed by a Gaelic Book of Common Prayer printed in 1608.<sup>47</sup> In the interim Sean O'Cearnaigh, treasurer of St. Patrick's Cathedral, took on the task of publishing the first Gaelic book to be printed in Ireland which acted on the initiative for vernacular usage in religion as indicated in Elizabeth's commission for the New Testament. O'Cearnaigh published 200 copies of his work entitled, *Aibidil Gaoldheilge 7 Caiticiosma*; unfortunately there is no evidence indicating how the copies were distributed. An interesting feature of the work is the inclusion of liturgically neutral prayers taken from Bishop John Carswell's book *Foirm na n-Urrnuidheadh* published in the Western Highlands. O'Cearnaigh was conscious of the sensitivity of the Anglican Church and chose those prayers from Carswell's book that would in no way prove offensive. Added to these prayers were translations of the catechism, various prayers for private recitation, and a translation of Archbishop Matthew Parker's twelve articles of religion. Unfortunately, this was not enough to halt the influence of the Irish Franciscans who were likewise busy printing religious material in Gaelic.<sup>48</sup>

During the Counter-Reformation, the Irish clerical exiles residing on the continent were devoted to countering Protestant religious material by promoting

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<sup>45</sup> R.F. Foster, *Modern Ireland*, 30.

<sup>46</sup> M. MacCraith, "The Gaelic Reaction", 153.

<sup>47</sup> M. MacCraith, "The Gaelic Reaction", 154.

<sup>48</sup> M. MacCraith, "The Gaelic Reaction", 154.



Gaelic works on Catholic religious doctrine. The focus for this new educational campaign was founded in the Irish Franciscan College of Louvain by Florence Conry in 1606. Conry had already been using his Gaelic skills while at the University of Salamanca in Spain where in 1593 he composed an unpublished Gaelic version of the catechism.<sup>49</sup> Within five years of the founding of the College of Louvain the first Catholic work in Gaelic was published. Bonabhentura O'hEoghusa composed a Gaelic catechism that was printed in Antwerp in 1611 and again in 1615 on the friars' own printing press in Louvain.<sup>50</sup> Following on this translation, Conry published his *Desiderius* in Louvain in 1615. Conry's translation was of a very popular Spanish religious text with which he took considerable liberties, both in omissions and additions. Among Conry's additions was one particularly intended to encourage Irish Catholics to remain steadfast in their faith. The most provocative addition Conry made was a direct attack on James VI and I's theory of Divine Right. The tract stated that power was derived from the people and it is possible that Conry was trying to indicate to James that he would have to earn the allegiance of the Irish Catholics.<sup>51</sup>

Added to the problem of erecting a new government in Ireland through plantation was the continued problem of religion with the majority of the population remaining Catholic. Similar to Wales, the enforcement of Protestantism in Ireland was deemed essential to the success of government. Although allowances were made for the Irish vernacular to promote Protestantism there followed a series of measures and attacks on Irish Catholics. Unlike the crown's reaction to Catholicism in Wales which was basically indifferent because of increasing support of Protestantism in the periphery, the crown's reaction to Catholicism in Ireland and the influence of the Irish Franciscans was to do what they could to stop the spread of the religion and to limit the amount of power wielded by the Catholics. The government's reaction was often intended to make examples out of Catholics by issuing punitive fines, through imprisonment, and even death. As a result, animosity towards central government and the New English was rampant because of their concurrent attacks to landownership and religion. This animosity would manifest

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<sup>49</sup> M. MacCraith, "The Gaelic Reaction", 148.

<sup>50</sup> M. MacCraith, "The Gaelic Reaction", 149.

<sup>51</sup> M. MacCraith, "The Gaelic Reaction", 150.



itself in the creation of the Irish Confederacy that would wage war against their colonizers during the Wars of the Three Kingdoms.

#### IV

There is some difficulty in conducting an exercise similar to those carried out in Ireland and Wales when attempting to classify government policies in the Highlands. The complexity that emerges in trying to categorize the Western Highlands and Isles is a result of the simple fact that there was no coherent agenda followed; however, shifts in the attitude of central government toward the Highlands can be seen and some semblance of central government's attitude towards the region can be deduced. As Professor Michael Lynch has pointed out, "What was happening, however, was more like a scatter-gun of official projects, some pet theories, private or quasi-official initiatives and ad hoc reactions by the royal administration to problems as they arose".<sup>52</sup> The result of this "scatter-gun" agenda was that government policies ranged from direct conquest and colonization to the promotion of local elites to government agents. In looking at Wales and Ireland as examples of state formation and internal colonialism respectively, direct correlations can be drawn to the policies enacted in the Highlands. The fact that no clear agenda was followed in the Western Highlands and Isles is clearly unique because in comparison to the other peripheral regions the crown's mentality was more obvious; however, when a particular scheme was put into action in the region the subsequent developments tend to mirror those seen in Ireland and Wales depending on whether the policies were of a colonial nature or state formation. The outcome of such a comparison is that between the 1590s and 1616 there was a movement toward colonization and domination based on the plantation models in Ireland, but the advent of the annual meetings in 1616 points to a shift in Highland policies toward assimilation and cooperation which were deemed beneficial and successful in government's dealings with Wales.

The policies of James VI towards the Western Highlands and Isles originated with an intention to colonize the region in an attempt to "civilize" the inhabitants. Between 1596 and 1609 three attempts were made by the Fife

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<sup>52</sup> M. Lynch, "James VI and the 'Highland Problem'", 216.



Adventurers to colonize the island of Lewis which paralleled the plantation schemes in Ulster and Munster. However, because of the resilient nature of the MacLeods of Lewis all three missions ended in failure. Although the MacLeods of Lewis were effectively destroyed it was more of a consequence of inter-clan turmoil than a result of the Fife Adventurers. Taking Michael Hechter's five principles used to define a region as a colony, internal colony or peripheral region we can see that the actions of the Fife Adventurers fall somewhere between colonialism and internal colonialism because the region ranked low in all but two categories, there was little administrative integration, no prestige given to the culture, and relatively no lasting association between the periphery and the core. The failure of the Fife Adventurers forced James VI and central government to look at other avenues through which to get the Western Highlands and Isles in line with the rest of the kingdom and resulted in the abandonment of colonizing policies. Although some continued to promote the idea of colonizing the Highlands, such as Andrew Knox, Bishop of the Isles, the official government position discarded the policy of dispossession and settlement in the Highlands.

Due to the failure of James VI's colonization scheme, the focus of central government shifted from domination to integration by empowering the local chiefs and working within the existing power structure of the Western Highlands and Isles. The fact that Kenneth MacKenzie, Lord Kintail, was granted a charter to the island of Lewis after the defeat of the Fife Adventurers illustrates the realization that it was better for the center if the existing power structure of the locality was employed rather than destroyed; thus using state formation tactics by promoting the elites to government agents.

This shift in policy is more clearly seen in the 1609 Statutes and the subsequent 1616 Regulations. The underlying intention in both these policies was to expose the chiefs to "civility" and to increase their power by holding them accountable for their clansmen, essentially creating government agents responsible for addressing the perceived lawlessness in the region.<sup>53</sup> Although both the Statutes and the Regulations attacked the Highland practices of fostering and the continued use of the "Irish tongue" it was intended to bring the region in line with the rest of

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<sup>53</sup> M. Braddick, *State Formation*, 340 & 373.



the kingdom. By conducting a comparative analysis with the details of the Welsh Acts of Union there are clear indications that the measures taken in the Highlands were aimed at integration along the lines of the policies enacted in Wales. For example, whether intentional or not on the part of central government, the attacks on Highland practices correlate with the attacks on Welsh customs of inheritance and laws, both of which were intended to bring about cultural congruency between the periphery and the core, as well as continuity of the legal system. An even more direct correlation between the Highlands and Wales is the crown's reaction to the indigenous languages. Both the Acts of Union in Wales and the 1609 and 1616 policies in the Highlands required the English language to be used; but again these "language clauses" were intended to provide continuity through the promotion of English in conjunction with the native language and did not remove the opportunity for the inhabitants to be bilingual. Where a difference is revealed is in the encouragement of the use of the vernacular for the promotion of Protestantism. In Wales and Ireland the Protestant church, as well as the Catholic church in Ireland, were busy since the 1580s publishing religious works in the vernacular in order to win the hearts of the inhabitants to one religion or the other. However, as will be discussed in chapter five, after the printing of Bishop Carswell's *Foirm na n-Urrnuidheadh* no attempts were made to further the use of the vernacular in the Western Highlands and Isles until the erection of the Synod of Argyll in 1638.<sup>54</sup> Although this appears to be a stark contrast to assimilation it had little effect on the political integration of the chiefs.

Similar to Wales, the new relationship between central government and the Western Highlands and Isles had positive and negative effects for both the crown and the chief creating a degree of coercion on both sides. In order for the chiefs to be employed as government agents and, as a result, increase their local authority they were forced to make certain concessions. To be eligible for promotion the chiefs were required to adopt the English language, as well as their heirs to be permitted to inherit the chiefship. Although this has been viewed as an attack on Gaelic it must be clarified that this stipulation did not outlaw the indigenous

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<sup>54</sup> For a detailed discussion of Bishop Carswell and *Foirm na n-Urrnuidheadh*, see chapter 4, "Religion from Reformation to War", p.105-07.



language but served to encourage bilingualism, which many chiefs were by 1609. Another concession the chiefs were forced to make was to abandon some of their traditional practices, primarily fosterage, and later the taking of calps, or the best beast on the death of a tenant. The ban on fosterage and taking calps had a definite negative effect on the clans. The proscription of fosterage removed a vital instrument in the clans' development and maintenance of their alliance networks, thus representing an attempt by the state to limit the powers of the clans. Similarly, as the taking of calps was seen by outsiders to be a form of oppression by the chief over his tenants, the outlawing of the practice was aimed at limiting the chiefs' power over his own clansmen and attempted to reduce his income by removing one of his sources of revenue. However, the positive effect that arose in this closer relationship with central government was that the chief and, subsequently the clan, was able to increase their political position and status in the region in their new capacity as government agent. Likewise, the crown was compelled to make concessions in order to achieve its goal of incorporating the Western Highlands and Isles. For the crown to be able to spread royal authority in the region it had to abandon its desire for direct rule and instead rely on the existing political structure. To do so meant that the crown had to empower the local elites whom they originally wanted to dominate, a concession which some members of government, for example the Earl of Strafford, had trouble stomaching. To reach a level of a mutually beneficial relationship, just as in Wales, both parties had to make sacrifices for the final outcome to become a relationship where the locality and central government were better able to cooperate and coexist while taking an increasing interest in each other's issues.

The most important aspect of central government's shift in policies toward assimilation of the Western Highlands and Isles was the advent of the annual meetings between the chiefs and Privy Council. The meetings were clearly intended to integrate the chiefs into central government and also to teach them by example the way to "civility". As a result of the meetings, chiefs were given powers which derived from central government and they were increasingly being used as agents to deal with such issues as brokenmen and Jesuits. Again, this is a striking correlation to the advent of Justices of the Peace in Wales and the promotion of the existing



local elites to government agents. Through this process the chiefs changed their focus away from locally derived power, which was often acquired through hostile means such as feuding, to their newly acquired power granted from the center. Once politically integrated into the kingdom, the exposure of the chiefs to Lowland practices and manners served to further integrate the chiefs into the social and economic spheres of the kingdom, thus increasing the level of mutual benefits between the chiefs and central administration along similar lines to those Welsh gentry who gained greater access to London and the Inns of Court. The end result of the annual meetings was the subduing of hostilities in the Western Highlands and Isles and the incorporation of the region into the entire kingdom; therefore, the policies derived from state formation proved successful in their attempt to get the locality to function as a component for the betterment of the entire kingdom.

Unfortunately, the use of state formation policies, primarily the annual meetings, partially collapsed. The increasing difficulties of central government to deal with the emerging crisis created by the Covenant regime shifted the focus of government away from state formation in the Western Highlands and Isles. Because the chiefs in the region were seen as more civilized and were proving themselves as adequate government agents the annual meetings were allowed to lapse. It was once thought that the way to abolish the lawlessness of the region was to summon the chiefs before the Privy Council to answer for their clansmen's behavior, but by the late 1620s it was determined that the best tactic was to allow the chiefs to remain home to deal with any disorders. Therefore, when problems began emerging as a result of the Covenant Movement the Privy Council granted the chiefs excuses from their obligatory meetings. The problem that the end of the annual meetings created was that the chiefs were no longer looking towards the center for political power; they instead reverted to striving for power within the locality.

By not following through with the policies of state formation on the political level, central government lost the ability to hold chiefs accountable as government agents and it meant that the chiefs were no longer required to work as a component of the whole. Although the Western Highlands and Isles were integrated along the same lines as Wales the problem was that the integration of the chiefs was still in the development stage when problems arose in the 1630s and was therefore relatively



short lived; Wales had been integrated for roughly one hundred years before the outbreak of the Civil Wars while the Western Highlands and Isles had only been integrated for, at the most, twenty years. The demise of the Western Highlands and Isles integration would later cause problems during the Civil Wars as the region no longer had a vested interest in the issues of central government and the clans used the conflict as a means to conduct their own form of justice and retaliation.



## Chapter 4

### **Central Government and the Western Highlands and Isles**

As the focus of this thesis is to determine why the Western Highlands and Isles delayed their entry into the conflict and why their involvement was short lived it is important to identify issues and events that were relevant to the patterns of allegiances. The study of politics during this period is crucial because of the obvious fact that politics would play an influential part in the chieftains' decision-making and subsequent actions. The key component to understanding how politics could have influenced the clans is the tenuous relationship between the Western Highlands and Isles and central government that would later manifest into struggles for political dominance in the region. Therefore, this chapter serves as an overview of the dealings between central government and the Western Highlands and Isles throughout the reign of Charles I and will highlight specific incidents that indicate a withdrawal of the region from the dealings of central government and a re-focusing on local issues which allowed the region to refrain from active participation in the "Scottish troubles" and to then align themselves in 1644-5 with the faction that best served their political needs.

The reign of Charles I saw the progressive decline of central government's control over the Western Highlands and Isles. Charles I's government no longer pursued the array of Highland policies of his father, James VI, which were at times heavy-handed yet successful in subduing a region whose inhabitants were once thought to be "allutterly barbares, with out any sort or shew of civilitie".<sup>1</sup> Although the clans of the Western Highlands and Isles were not barbarians it is understandable how their societal structure and the processes of Highland justice could be misinterpreted as such. In looking at the first half of James's reign it is possible to see how his perception of the region came about; the region, in comparison to the Lowlands, continued to be fraught with excessive cattle thieving, murder for retribution, open rebellion, their economy was based on subsistence farming and lacked the regular use of a monetary unit, and many of the clans functioned

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<sup>1</sup> J. Sommerville (ed.), *Political Writings of James VI* (Cambridge, 1994), 24.



independent of central government only obeying the state when it was forced to directly intervene. By 1616 the Western Highlands and Isles was seen as a liability to the safety and security of the rest of the kingdom due to the clans' hostile behavior and the renewed possibility that the region's instability would provide an opportunity for invasion from Catholic nations. Through James VI's policies of colonization, the planting of lowlanders in the Isles, and the compulsory annual meetings between the Privy Council and the island chiefs, the perception of James's administration was that it transformed the Western Highlands and Isles from "allutterly barbares" into law-abiding subjects and government agents. The true cornerstone to this transformation was a reliance on annual meetings where the Privy Council was able to hold chiefs accountable for their behavior and that of their kinsmen as well as to expose the chiefs to a more sophisticated and less violent way of life.

By the succession of Charles I, the Western Highlands and Isles were generally subdued. With the exception of a few isolated incidents, such as the Clan MacIain's piracy, the perceived period of blood feuds and lawlessness appeared to be over. This relative peace in the region led to a decline in government intervention. By the time the Scottish Revolution broke out in 1638 central government had almost completely neglected the island chiefs, allowing the inhabitants of the Western Highlands and Isles to regain their autonomy.

## I

Since 1616 it had become customary that the island chiefs were to appear before the Council every year in early July. It was believed by members of the Privy Council "that by their comeing heir yeirlie thay may be reducit to civilitie and maid to acknowledge their obedience to his Majestie and his lawis".<sup>2</sup> In order to enforce this "obedience" the Council ordered the island chiefs to nominate between three and eight leading gentry who were also to be accountable for the clan being "reduceit to

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<sup>2</sup> As quoted in D. Gregory, *History of the Western Highlands and Isles of Scotland, from A.D. 1493 to A.D. 1625* (Edinburgh, 1975), 393-5.



civilitie". Out of the nominated gentry, one to three gentry attended the annual meetings with their respective chief. If a clan was found to be in violation of the law or was in any way found to be hostile, then one or all of the gentry brought to the meeting would be held by the Privy Council, often in Edinburgh Castle, until order was restored. As the clan gentry were often tacksmen their freedom was essential to the functioning of the clan system and for the subsistence of the clan chief; therefore, the imprisonment of the gentry served as an incentive to regain order in the clan's territory.

Another measure employed by the Privy Council, which proved more effective than warding clan gentry, was the exaction of cautions and sureties. These were financial guarantees for the clan's continued good behavior and for the chief's appearance at the next year's meeting. Depending on the size of the clan and their past behavior sureties would range from 5,000 merks to £10,000 Scots. The system of demands for sureties was found to be so successful that it was later implemented also to underwrite the payment of rents, duties and taxes. The combination of imprisonment of the gentry and the exacting of sureties increased clan obedience and in many ways increased the chief's "civility" to such an extent that by 1625 it was common for island chiefs to be employed as government agents, being granted commissions against neighboring troublesome clans or even against their own disruptive clansmen.

Unfortunately, the only surviving records of the meetings are found in the *Register of the Privy Council* and do not provide details of the annual meetings, nor is there a surviving minute book if one was ever written. What are recorded in the *Register* are the attendance records of the chiefs with the amounts of their cautions and sureties, commissions issued while the chiefs were in Edinburgh, and any legal disputes that needed to be addressed by the Privy Council. By piecing together the evidence found in the *Register* it appears that the chiefs presented themselves to the Privy Council and made whatever payments were due to the crown, then awaited word of any complaints or charges being brought against them. If a complaint was filed and upheld the chief would forfeit his surety and the matter was either dealt with by the Privy Council or referred to the justice court. If no charges were brought against the chief then he would be granted any commissions for which the Privy



Council needed his services and be allowed to return home. In comparing the records that arise out of the annual meetings with the general history of the area it becomes apparent that the time period in which the chiefs were held accountable for their clan's behavior coincides with a period during which there was a decrease in the frequency and longevity of blood feuds recorded and an increase in the number of disputes being resolved through the legal system in Edinburgh.

A common measure used by central government in dealing with lawlessness in the Highlands was to issue a commission of fire and sword. These commissions were generally licenses to take military action against those deemed by central government to be in defiance of the law. A commission of fire and sword gave power to the commissioners to use whatever means necessary to enforce the law with a full indemnity of their actions in carrying out their commission. Commissions were usually granted to landed superiors, such as the Earls of Argyll and the MaKenzies of Kintail, but during the 1620s they were increasingly being issued to lesser chiefs through the course of the annual meetings because they were steadily proving themselves to be capable of implementing the laws of the kingdom.

The first large scale commission handed down in the early months of Charles I's reign illustrated the degree to which central government had come to rely on the island chiefs for help with general problems. This commission, issued in 1625, was in response to the Clan MacIan's rebellion in Ardnamurchan and their subsequent piracy in the Irish Sea. As was common during the early modern period in Scotland, the Clan Campbell's expansion into Ardnamurchan led to a rebellion, in this case against Donald Campbell of Barbreck-Lochawe. Archibald, 4<sup>th</sup> Earl of Argyll had acquired the superiority over Ardnamurchan but the Campbells did not enforce the claim until 1612 when John MacIan, chief of Clan MacIan, died, leaving a minor as heir. As was customary for Clan Campbell, Argyll handed over the superiority to a kinsman, on this occasion to Donald Campbell of Barbreck-Lochawe. Unfortunately, Donald Campbell had a heavy-handed way of dealing with the MacIans. Even though William Stirling of Auchyle wrote to Donald Campbell on behalf of Argyll recommending him to "press to win the people with kindness rather



nor extremitie”, the oppression of the MacIans continued until September 1624 when the clan broke out in rebellion and piracy.<sup>3</sup>

The Privy Council’s response to the Clan MacIan’s piracy was first a commission of fire and sword issued to the Campbells, specifically naming Lord Lorne and the Campbells of Cawdor, Lochnell, Ardkinglass, and Auchenbreck. However, the Campbells proved unsuccessful and a proclamation was issued in 1625 ordering all of “his Majesties lieges and subjects betuix saxtie and saxtene yearis... within the boundis of the shirefdomes of Argyll and Tarbett, and within the south, west and north Illis...[to] assist the saidis commissionaris [Campbells] in the persute of the saidis rebellis [MacIans] be sea or land.”<sup>4</sup> By including the Isles, the proclamation implicated the chiefs in the region and the subsequent records in the *Register of the Privy Council* verify the fact that the chiefs were expected to act as junior commissioners against the MacIans. Two letters written to Rory Mor MacLeod of Dunvegan chastised the chief for his lack of service claiming “so far as we consave in the bussienes, your behaviour hes bene more in show and ostentatioun nor in substance and effect”.<sup>5</sup> Because communication with the isles was difficult, claimed the Privy Council, it wrote the aforesaid letters based on inaccurate information and was quick to issue an apology when it became apparent that Rory Mor MacLeod was key in the final subduing of the rebels.<sup>6</sup> The inclusion of the chiefs of the Western Highlands and Isles in this commission marks the point at which the government was comfortable giving the chiefs powers that put them in a more powerful position and re-emphasized the benefits of gaining power derived from central government. The inclusion of men such as Rory Mor MacLeod and Donald Gorme MacDonald of Sleat illustrates a reciprocal relationship that was beginning to develop between the crown and the chiefs. The chiefs were now being seen as beneficial to the instilling of law and order as the Earl of Argyll had been, while the acknowledgement and legitimization by the crown of the chiefs’ power in the region offered the chiefs the possibility of increasing their status and local influence if they worked in cooperation with the crown.

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<sup>3</sup> E.J. Cowan, “Fishers in Drumlie Waters: Clanship and Campbell expansion in the time of Gilleasbuig Gruamach”, *TGSI*, LIV (1987), 269-312, at p. 294.

<sup>4</sup> *RPC*, 2<sup>nd</sup> series, i, 23.

<sup>5</sup> *RPC*, 2<sup>nd</sup> series, i, 34.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*



Although the crown and the local chiefs were developing a closer relationship and were formulating a mutually beneficial arrangement the cornerstone to this accord was beginning to erode, namely the annual meetings. Due to the increased role of the chiefs as government agents and the subsequent peace resulting from the chiefs' new position of authority, attendance at the July meetings appears to have become inconsistent as early as 1624. None of the chiefs appeared for the 1624, 1625, 1629 and 1631 meetings, only MacLean of Coll, due to his indisposition and age, actually having been given an excuse prior his non-attendance in 1631.<sup>7</sup> In April 1632, the island chiefs' lawyers in Edinburgh presented a series of petitions to the Privy Council requesting to be excused from the 1632 annual meeting. The first petition recorded was on behalf of Sir Lachlan MacLean of Morvern, younger son of Hector of Duart. The petition argued that he, his father, and brother had already been in Edinburgh for nearly a year and there had been no complaints brought against them since their last appearance. A similar petition was submitted on behalf of the captain of Clanranald who claimed that he had already been to Edinburgh in March and April and likewise had no complaints against him. MacDonald of Sleat's petition claimed that he was under the impression that the Council had agreed to a previous petition from "the gentlemen of the Isles" which stated that if proper representation was made early in March and there were no complaints against them they did not have to appear for one year, and such was the case for himself. The final petition was from Hector MacNeil of Barra which claimed he was not a "chiftane of ane clan nor ane frehalder" because Sir John MacKenzie of Tarbat was superior of Barra, and MacNeil explained that it took three years of his living to make the round-trip from Barra to Edinburgh, thus he had exhausted his funds by appearing once or twice.<sup>8</sup> All of the April petitions were granted for one year only, on the condition the chiefs appeared in 1633 which four chiefs complied with.<sup>9</sup>

After repeated lapses in attendance the Privy Council attempted to reinstate the island chiefs' annual meetings in 1636. The revival of the meetings was an attempt by the Privy Council to maintain a hold on the region. However, the

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<sup>7</sup> *RPC*, 2<sup>nd</sup> series, iv, 280.

<sup>8</sup> *RPC*, 2<sup>nd</sup> series, iv, 675-7; R.L. MacNeil, *The Clan MacNeil: clann Niall of Scotland* (New York, 1923), 76.

<sup>9</sup> For a breakdown of attendance see Appendix 5: Attendance Record of Annual Meetings 1616-1642.



Council's efforts were generally ineffective as some clans were already beginning to enjoy increased freedom from government intervention while others were already having to look to local politics to fill the void left by the collapse of power derived from central government. Therefore, on 21 July 1636, Mr. James Logy, attorney for MacDonald of Sleat, MacLean of Morvern and the captain of Clanranald, appeared before the Privy Council alongside George Campbell, attorney for MacLean of Coll and MacKinnon of that Strathordale, requesting an excuse from their meeting that was supposed to take place in July 1636. The requests were made "in regarde of a great famine within these bounds, of the necessitie of Sir Donald [et al] his remaining at home to keepe the countrie in order the time of the fishing, and in respect of thair notour legall behaviour and that there wes no complaint made upon thame". The Council disagreed with the necessity to stay at home but conceded that "if, upon the like incident necessities the saids ylanders sall be disabled to appeare" they could apply for dispensation no later than the first council day of June.<sup>10</sup> Clearly this ruling was not adhered to as no chiefs appeared in 1637 and the Council subsequently gave them until the 17<sup>th</sup> of November to comply with their previous order to appear.

After this feeble attempt to reinforce the chiefs' meetings in Edinburgh, the Council again changed their attitude toward the meetings in June 1638. As a result of the National Covenant and the emergence of the Covenant Movement, Donald Gorme MacDonald of Sleat and Rory Mor MacLeod of Dunvegan applied and were granted excuses from attendance on the grounds that "the country was very disturbed and their presence was needed in their awne countrey".<sup>11</sup> The granting of this petition served as the definitive end of the annual meetings by allowing MacDonald and MacLeod to use the current turmoil as the reason for not attending. On the heels of MacDonald and MacLeod's petition came a "Supplication from Gentlemen of the Isles", presented in person by Donald Gorme MacDonald of Sleat on behalf of all the island chiefs. The supplication claimed that the chiefs had striven to maintain obedience to law and justice and requested to remain at home "in good hop to retaine and hald thair haill bounds under obedience". The supplication

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<sup>10</sup> *RPC*, 2<sup>nd</sup> series, vi, 300-1.

<sup>11</sup> *RPC*, 2<sup>nd</sup> series, vii, 22, 26.



was granted on 26 June 1638 and although it did not specifically cancel all future meetings it had the effect of doing so.<sup>12</sup>

When the annual meetings first began in 1610 it was believed essential to summon the chiefs to Edinburgh during times of trouble to enforce order and subdue hostilities, but by the end of the 1620s the chiefs proved themselves to be useful in maintaining the peace in the Western Highlands and Isles and the Privy Council began to accept the idea that chiefs should stay at home to enforce law and order among their clan and territory. It can be argued that the chiefs gained their autonomy in the 1620s as a result of a partnership that had developed between central government and the chiefs through the course of the annual meetings. Although the chiefs were increasingly being seen as reliable in implementing law and order in the region, the relationship between the council and the chiefs was one of superior over subordinate with both entities having different agendas because the process of assimilation was still relatively new. A partnership implies a joint venture with both parties working towards a common goal; however the council's main objective was the subjugating of the inhabitants of the Western Highlands and Isles while the chiefs' goal was to maintain or increase their position within the locality. What is seen in the transactions between the council and the chiefs during the meetings was a realization that cooperation would enable both parties to achieve their goal, but this should not be construed as their entering into a joint venture with central government and the chiefs adopting a common goal. The dynamics of this relationship cannot account for the region gaining their autonomy because the purpose for allowing the chiefs to stay home during times of trouble was to better enable the chiefs to continue their work for the council and was not intended to allow them to function independent from central government, which is what inevitably happened.

The increase in autonomy of the chiefs which resulted from the Privy Council's ideology that chiefs should remain in their territories during times of trouble was further increased by central government's preoccupation with the emergence of the Covenant Movement in 1638. It is surprising that the Privy Council allowed the annual meetings to fall into disuse when they had proven so

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<sup>12</sup> *RPC*, 2<sup>nd</sup> series, vii, 26.



effective in ending the hostilities in the region. On the other hand, it could also be assumed that because the chiefs had, by 1638, been subdued that they did not pose a threat and, therefore, could be left on their own for a short time while central government dealt with the grander problems of religion. Whatever the reason may be, hindsight indicates that the meetings could have been continued by either the royalist government of Charles or the Covenant regime. The meetings would have been most useful for the Covenant regime if they wanted to enforce the National Covenant and later the Solemn League and Covenant throughout the kingdom. By using sureties and warding of clan gentry they would have been able to enforce the Covenant, and the same could be said if Charles had wanted to enforce the King's Covenant on a larger scale. Furthermore, the meetings would have allowed the Covenanters to commission chiefs for the Covenant cause, specifically in opposition to Alasdair MacColla and the Antrim threat. Instead of using the meetings to their advantage, allowing the meetings to end opened the door for chiefs to revert to local issues. Chiefs were no longer being held accountable for their behavior on a regular basis, were not being imposed on by the external forces from central government, and were no longer able to increase their status in the locality through a reciprocal relationship with the crown. This allowed local political issues to impose on a national theatre with the arrival of MacColla and the Irish Army.

## II

An analysis of the Western Highlands and Isles post-1637 indicates that the inhabitants had reverted to their local mentality, preoccupying themselves with local issues almost completely indifferent to what was happening on a national level. The difference between local and national mentalities can be defined as a heightened concern and awareness of issues that would only have a direct effect on the clan's position within its community, rather than a concern for issues that would impact the kingdom as a whole; for example, disputes over territory would take precedence over a new Book of Common Prayer. There is little documentation of the Western Highlands and Isles' involvement in national politics between 1638 and 1644, as well as of their involvement in the royalist campaign of James Graham, Marquis of



Montrose, and Alasdair MacColla. The lack of documentation of the region further supports the fact that the clans and central government were uninterested in each other's agendas during the early stages of the Covenant Movement. What are available are references in the *Acts of Parliament*, *Register of the Privy Council*, and in the Stair Society's *Selected Justiciary Cases, 1624-1650* of clan versus clan lawsuits indicating that the government under the Covenanters dealt with the region, and the clans, on a case by case basis in the form of judicial actions. These lawsuits, ranging from petty to large-scale issues, provide evidence that the chiefs went back to focusing on personal business and in some cases resumed feuding with one another.

A case concerning local politics that was brought before central government was a complex suit that first appeared in the *Acts of Parliament* in 1641, filed by Angus MacLeod of Assynt against George MacKenzie, 2<sup>nd</sup> earl of Seaforth. This case is difficult to comprehend initially because the supplication by MacLeod of Assynt against Seaforth, 10 November 1641, asked for his August supplication to be dealt with, and claimed Seaforth had been cited and called numerous times to answer.<sup>13</sup> Further investigation in the minutes of the *Acts of Parliament* reveals a second supplication filed by MacLeod of Assynt on 16 November 1641 in which he resubmitted his August supplication craving repossession of his lands.<sup>14</sup> A second entry in the minutes is the government's response to the 16<sup>th</sup> of November supplication stating that Charles I and the Committee of Estates remitted the supplication to the Privy Council.<sup>15</sup> Fortunately, the details of the discharge to Seaforth from MacLeod of Assynt are recorded in the *Register of the Privy Council* on 22 December 1642. The discharge reveals that the original supplication claimed that "injuries" were done to MacLeod of Assynt and his tenants in Aluein and Leadmore by the earl of Seaforth claiming superiority over Assynt's territory.<sup>16</sup> However, in the discharge Assynt retracted his previous claim on the grounds that he realized that Seaforth had been given authority in Aluein and Leadmore by

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<sup>13</sup> *APS*, v, 698.

<sup>14</sup> *APS*, v, 425.

<sup>15</sup> *APS*, v, 713.

<sup>16</sup> Ledmore can be located at NC247121. Aluein is assumed to be somewhere in the proximity of Ledmore but can not be exactly located. The *RPC* has three variant spellings: in the marginal note as Alnein, in the text of the document as Aluein, and in the index as Alvein.



MacLeod of Assynt's father. The discharge states that "seeing that what was done by the Earl of Seaforth in the apprising was for just and true duties and in a lawful way, as he is informed, and that the complaints were therefore unadvisedly given in by him", Assynt admitted he acted "unbecomingly and rashly".<sup>17</sup> Possession of clan territory was often difficult to prove and resulted in long periods of feuding between neighbors due to the scarcity of written charters. Whether or not Assynt dropped his claim against Seaforth because he found actual documents can only be speculated; it is quite possible that Assynt was intimidated by the powerful Earl of Seaforth to drop the lawsuit. The value of this case, in an overview of the central government's dealings with the clans, lies not in the reasons the case was brought forward and later dropped but in the fact that it was submitted. The suit between Assynt and Seaforth, with many other similar disputes, indicates that while the kingdom was concerned with the emergence of the Covenant Movement the clans were less involved in the national theatre and were concerned with local issues, such as land possession.

Another dispute to be examined clearly shows that the clans of the Western Highlands and Isles did in fact revert to the bygone practice of feuding and violence when government intervention collapsed and chiefs were no longer held accountable for their clans' actions. On 27 August 1641 Lachlan Mackintosh of Torcastle filed a supplication against MacDonald of Glengarry claiming that certain Glengarry friends and kinsmen went to Kilravock in Moray in August 1640 and stole oxen and horses. The detailed supplication reports that the inhabitants of Kilravock followed and killed two of the thieves, and that the younger Glengarry and others were so enraged at the murder of their kinsmen that they went armed into Inverness the 15th August. Glengarry's men, who included three of the old Laird's sons and 80 to 100 kinsmen, attacked Lachlan Mackintosh and nine to ten of his men in Inverness, firing 40 to 50 shots from their pistols, killing two of Mackintosh's men and wounding four to five others.<sup>18</sup> The Privy Council found that the Laird of Glengarry was too old to adequately address the situation and ruled that Angus, younger

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<sup>17</sup> *RPC*, 2<sup>nd</sup> series, vii, 364.

<sup>18</sup> *APS*, v, 649.



Glengarry and grandson to the Laird, was to be held accountable.<sup>19</sup> As a result, the act of caution filed on 27 August 1641 cited that Glengarry, younger, requested to read the supplication presented by Mackintosh and agreed to return the following morning to answer the charges, to which the Laird of MacLeod acted as cautioner for Glengarry's return the following day.<sup>20</sup> On 6 October 1641 Mackintosh and the Millers, the family of the two killed by Glengarry's men, produced an act of horning on the grounds that Glengarry, younger, had yet to find caution and present the guilty kinsmen.<sup>21</sup>

Apparently, Glengarry, younger, still neglected to comply; his supplication filed on 1 March 1642 requested he be released from ward, claiming that he had been warded in Edinburgh Castle for thirteen weeks and could no longer provide the necessary maintenance for himself and his two keepers. Sir John MacKenzie of Tarbat agreed to stand caution for £10,000 guaranteeing that Glengarry, younger, would stay within the bounds of Edinburgh and appear before the Privy Council the first meeting day of June. It was further agreed that if Glengarry, younger, did not exhibit the guilty persons he would re-enter ward in Edinburgh Castle.<sup>22</sup> Upon being released from ward Glengarry set about providing "satisfaction" to Mackintosh as is evident in a series of notarial instruments recorded on 29 October, 11 December, 17 December 1642, and 3 January 1643. Throughout the records Glengarry, younger, agreed to give satisfaction to Mackintosh, but there appears to have been a dispute over what was "reasonable satisfaction". According to the notarial instrument witnessed by Hugh, Lord Lovat, he attested to Glengarry giving reasonable satisfaction on 11 December 1642. Although the details of what was offered by Glengarry, younger, for "reasonable satisfaction" are not available it is clear that it was not deemed sufficient, because another supplication was filed by Mackintosh of Torcastle requesting to have Glengarry returned to ward for not exhibiting certain kinsmen on 3 January 1643. After months of negotiating with Mackintosh, Glengarry finally offered to give Mackintosh whatever satisfaction the Privy

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<sup>19</sup> *RPC*, 2<sup>nd</sup> series, vii, 174.

<sup>20</sup> *APS*, v, 346.

<sup>21</sup> Although filed on the 6<sup>th</sup> of October, the horning was actually produced on 20 September 1641. *Selected Justiciary Cases, 1624-1650* (Stair Society, 1972), ii, 461.

<sup>22</sup> *RPC*, 2<sup>nd</sup> series, vii, 213.



Council found reasonable.<sup>23</sup> As with the previous case, this suit indicates that the region was transgressing from their peaceful cooperative position within the Scottish kingdom toward the traditional practices of feuding essential to reestablishing the clans' position within the locality.

The limited number of documents concerning the Western Highlands and Isles between 1637 and 1644 reflects the fact that the region had little concern for the emergence of the Covenant Movement. The sources that are available clearly indicate that a greater emphasis was put on issues close to home, such as land disputes and cattle rustling. As will later be discussed, the reassertion of local politics would facilitate the recruitment of the region for the royalist faction, primarily because of the negative impact that Clan Campbell had on the Western Highlands and Isles, as well as the existing alliances and rivalries between clans that resulted from their heightened sense of local politics.

### III

While the Western Highlands and Isles were occupied with local issues and politics, the rest of Scotland was increasingly becoming involved in the national issues relating to the Covenant Movement. In order to impose national politics on even the most remote regions of the kingdom subscription to the National Covenant was ruled compulsory by the Committee of Estates. The decision made by the Estates was that all those holding or aspiring to hold offices, including all civil, military, and ecclesiastical posts, must subscribe the National Covenant. Furthermore, disaffected members of the landed class would be deemed delinquent and were liable to have their rents uplifted for use in the Covenant cause, and were also subject to ecclesiastical censure.<sup>24</sup> In order to facilitate such a widespread campaign the Committee of Estates held meetings at various locations throughout Scotland, during which the Covenant was read and those summoned to attend were expected to come forward and subscribe to the document.

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<sup>23</sup> *RPC*, 2<sup>nd</sup> series, vii, 559-63.

<sup>24</sup> A. Macinnes, *Clanship, Commerce and the House of Stuart: 1603-1788* (East Linton, 1996), 90.

Although the Western Highlands and Isles were far removed from anything pertaining to central government, they were not exempt from attending these local Covenanting meetings and subscribing. In a letter from the Committee of Estates, dated 26 May 1638, the attendance of Lord Reay, chief of Clan MacKay, was requested at a meeting in Inverness where the commissioners would meet with local barons and gentlemen, “Informing yow truelie how loyalie we haue proceidit from the beginning”. This letter also makes evident the fact that the Committee of Estates was willing to use intimidation and threats to acquire the necessary signatures to the National Covenant when they implied that Lord Reay’s non-attendance would be viewed as a defiance of his feudal superior, the Earl of Sutherland.<sup>25</sup> Of those in attendance at the Inverness meeting, most Grants and Mackintoshes did not sign as their territory was “invyroned amidst the Hieland”; however, all others present agreed to sign including the Master of Berridale, heir to the Earl of Caithness, plus forty of his friends and vassals, the Earl of Sutherland, and the gentry of Sutherland, Donald MacKay, Lord Reay, and the chiefs of Clan Ross, Munro, and Fraser.<sup>26</sup>

Subscription to the National Covenant was essentially a signature gathering exercise. Those in attendance at the Inverness meeting were not pushed to act on behalf of the Covenant Movement. In actuality, Lord Reay and others who signed the document returned home and the Earl of Sutherland, whose power was used to intimidate Reay to subscribe, was not seen as being an active Covenanter through most of the “troubles”. In essence the purpose of the Inverness meeting was to get the nobles, lairds and gentlemen to merely put pen to paper. Furthermore, the Committee of Estates’ use of threats and innuendoes to gain subscription, such as the threat to Lord Reay, makes the usefulness of the signatures even more questionable because the subscribers’ true intention is blurred through the possible intimidation used to acquire the subscription. Not surprisingly a number of people credited with signing the Covenant were actually neutral or even royalists, some signed but did not actively participate and others were credited with signing but in fact had not. The exaggerated list of names of those who subscribed included names

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<sup>25</sup> NAS, Papers of Lord Reay, GD84/2/194.

<sup>26</sup> As quoted in D. Stevenson, *The Scottish Revolution 1637-44: The Triumph of the Covenanters* (Newton Abbot, 1973), 92.



such as Forbes, Fraser, Grant, Mackintosh, MacKenzie, MacKay, MacLean, MacDonald, Innes, and every man by the name of Campbell.<sup>27</sup>

On the surface it would appear that almost every subject in Charles I's northern kingdom was against his religious innovations, but more thorough investigation reveals the list of subscribers to be a padded list used for intimidation; it included men known to have already sworn allegiance to the king, such as the MacDonalds. The National Covenant was intended to be a bond through which all those who subscribed were opposed to Charles's innovation, therefore, the larger the list the larger the opposition would appear. The inaccuracies in the lists of subscribers suggest that the intention was to persuade Charles into complying with the demands of the Covenant regime because he was simply outnumbered.

The Covenant regime's attempts to collect subscriptions for the Solemn League and Covenant in 1644 proved to be more complex than their original campaign to acquire signatures to the National Covenant. This difficulty serves as another reason why allowing the annual meetings to lapse was detrimental to central government. As has been seen, once the annual meetings lapsed central government began to lose control over a large portion of the Highlands and once control was lost and the Highlanders regained their autonomy it would prove nearly impossible to regain that control. Therefore, without any structured avenue to control the Highlands, the Covenant regime was left with having to make specific summonses and revert to direct threats to get the necessary signatures. An example of the tactics used by the Covenanters is seen in a summons dated 1 April 1644 to the Marquis of Huntly and several hundred others who, according to the document, had neglected to subscribe the Solemn League and Covenant. All those named in the summons were to appear on 4 June 1644 or be subjected to the penalties as a delinquent.<sup>28</sup> Although similar tactics were sometimes used in the campaign for the National Covenant, summonses and threats were more widespread during the campaign for the Solemn League and Covenant as the subscription meetings used previously for subscription were no longer effective.

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<sup>27</sup> Stevenson, *The Scottish Revolution*, 99.

<sup>28</sup> NAS, Montrose Papers, GD220/3/72.

Further difficulties were had in the Western Highlands and Isles as they were almost completely out of the government's grasp. By enforcing their autonomy from central government through their non-subscription the clans in the region made a passive statement on the issues concerning national politics. Furthermore, by 1644 the region was less inclined to sign anything put forward by the Covenant regime because many clans in the region were beginning to align with the royalists. Between 1644 and 1645 the Western Highlands and Isles switched from passive to active participation in national politics due to the arrival of Alasdair MacColla and the preparations for war that were beginning amongst royalists throughout the Highlands, especially the Clan Donald in the west. As a result, numerous areas throughout the Western Highlands and Isles remained refractory either because they were directly involved in the upcoming royalist campaign or because of the repercussions they would face if they aligned themselves with the Covenant regime; for example, Badenoch in April 1644 was reputed to "absolutlie refuse obedience" while the whole of Skye and the Outer Hebrides in May 1650 were reported to still be negligent in their subscription.<sup>29</sup>

#### IV

During the Scottish "troubles" the Committee of Estates established numerous committees and issued commissions to deal with the Highlands regionally. As with the lawsuits between clans that central government was forced to address, the issuance of committees and commissions was conducted on a case by case basis. What is significant in looking at the "Trot of Turriff" and the commissions issued against the Athollmen is the fact participants in both risings were harshly dealt with when they threatened the Covenant Movement; yet, similar commissions and committees were not aimed at the Western Highlands to thwart their involvement with the royalists. Comparisons can be drawn between the confrontational actions taken during the incident known as the "Trot of Turriff", which launched the Gordon Risings, and the actions taken by royalist clans in the west; as will be seen, central government's response to the two regions uprisings was drastically different.

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<sup>29</sup> As quoted in Macinnes, *Clanship, Commerce and the House of Stuart*, 90.



Likewise, the Covenant Regime's response to the preparations being made in Atholl for a royalist rising in the Central Highlands was not paralleled in the west to preempt a royalist attack from the Clan Donald.

One of the largest committees created by the Estates was the Committee for Disturbances of the North that dealt with the Gordon Risings in the northeast, primarily in Aberdeenshire and Banff. The Aberdeenshire royalists under the leadership of Lord Aboyne, second son of the Marquis of Huntly, were determined to prevent a Covenanting meeting from taking place in Turriff. Lord Aboyne had received intelligence that the Covenanters were to hold a meeting on 26 April 1639 to determine their future conduct, but were forced to postpone the meeting until the 20<sup>th</sup> of May. As a result, the royalists' forces marched to Turriff and reached the town at dawn on the 14<sup>th</sup> of May. The royalist arrival caught the Covenanters off guard and after a brief skirmish the Covenanters fled. Once Turriff was secured the royalists marched to Aberdeen under the leadership of Sir George Ogilvie of Banff and occupied the burgh on 15 May 1639. This started a series of occupations of Aberdeen between the royalists and Covenanters. From the 15<sup>th</sup> to the 23<sup>rd</sup> of May the royalists controlled the burgh, then the Covenanters re-took Aberdeen between the 23<sup>rd</sup> of May and 2<sup>nd</sup> of June, and finally the royalists occupied the city again on 6 June 1639.<sup>30</sup>

The struggles to occupy Aberdeen and to control the rest of the north-east prompted the Committee for Disturbances of the North to be created on an "Order from his Majesty for suppression of hostilities in North" written on 29 June 1639. The order stated that if the north should return to hostilities then "we have heirby thought fitt to require yow [the Committee of Estates] to give speddie order for the repressing thair of after such maner as yow sall find to be most necessarie at this time".<sup>31</sup> The Estates responded by electing a group of commissioners to follow what course they deemed appropriate for halting the troubles. The commissioners selected were those most susceptible to any injuries done by the "rebels"; those named included James, Earl of Moray, James, Earl of Findlater, Sir Robert Innes of that Ilk, James Grant of Freuchie, James Crichton of Frendraught, Alexander Dunbar

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<sup>30</sup> W. Fraser, *The Chiefs of Grant*, 2 vols (Edinburgh, 1883), i, 246; Stevenson, *The Scottish Revolution*, 147-8.

<sup>31</sup> *RPC*, 2<sup>nd</sup> series, vii, 120.



of Westfield, Sheriff of Moray, Sir William Forbes of Craigievar, Robert Cumming of Altyre, and Thomas MacKenzie of Pluscarden. According to the Committee of Estates' "Approval of proceedings of the commission for dealing with the North" written on 1 December 1641 the commissioners held court at the Tolbooth of Elgin in February and March 1641 where delinquents were convicted and fined, and at the Kirk of Keith in May 1641 where offenders were processed and convicted but not fined. The Privy Council approved the two rolls of the courts presented by the commissioners and ordered letters of horning and the like to be written in accordance with the commission's decisions. Due to the success of the commission the Privy Council further ordered the commission to continue in their duties.<sup>32</sup>

However, it seems that the committee's success was limited as the *Register of the Privy Council* entry for 22 March 1642 notes "Sheriffs in North to attend meeting of Commission for repressing disorder in the North" in which letters were sent to all sheriffs in the north to meet the commissioners in Perth on the 6<sup>th</sup> of April to discuss the current situation in the region.<sup>33</sup> It proved a difficult task to employ highlanders to persecute their own as is evident in a "Charge to sheriffs of northern shires to put in execution the precepts of justice courts". On 14 April 1642, the Privy Council claimed that it had been informed that some sheriffs were neglecting the duties assigned to them in the aforementioned letters and were not executing the precepts handed down from the Commission for repressing disorder in the north. Therefore, a second series of letters was issued by the Council charging all sheriffs, baillies and stewarts to "caus duellie and orderlie executte the same".<sup>34</sup> Two years later a second appointment to the "Committee for the North" was issued on 16 April 1644, this time directly in response to the open rebellion of the Marquis of Huntly and Gordon of Haddo. These appointments were similar to the original in that the Estates deemed a committee necessary for the securing of peace in the region and granted the commissioners the power to do everything possible to prevent and suppress the rebellion; again this commission included all those most vulnerable

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<sup>32</sup> *RPC*, 2<sup>nd</sup> series, vii, 159.

<sup>33</sup> *RPC*, 2<sup>nd</sup> series, vii, 228.

<sup>34</sup> *RPC*, 2<sup>nd</sup> series, vii, 237.



such as Lords Gordon, Forbes, and Fraser and the Lairds of Glenorchy, Forbes, Grant, and Innes.<sup>35</sup>

The establishment of the Committee for the Disturbances of the North clearly attempted to control the inhabitants of the northeast, but failed due to the strength of their royalist commitment. Although the northeast had not been involved in the annual meetings between the chiefs and the Privy Council, their autonomy proved too strong for the government to be able to control. The fact that the likes of the Marquis of Huntly and the Gordons in the northeast were allowed to conduct business with limited government interaction throughout the reigns of James VI and Charles I only served to increase their autonomy to such an extent that the power of the Marquis of Huntly over the region rivaled, if not surpassed, that of central government. The inclusion of the “Trot of Turriff” is important to a discussion of the Western Highlands and Isles because of the similarities between the actions of the Gordons in 1641 and events in the Western Highlands between 1644 and 1645. Although both the Gordons and the royalist clans in the west were clearly adversaries to the Covenant Movement it is noteworthy that measures similar to those imposed on the north were not taken by the Covenant regime in dealing with the rising of the western clans. This discrepancy in dealing with royalist factions illustrates central government’s lack of interest in the Western Highlands and Isles and its belief that the region was not a primary concern for the success or failure of the regime.

Similar to the Covenanters response to the northern rising, in response to growing support for Charles I in the central Highlands the Covenanters took a proactive position and issued a commission to the Earl of Argyll on 12 June 1640 against all ‘Athollmen’ and specifically named the royalist Earl of Atholl, Lord Ogilvie, their accomplices in Atholl and the Braes of Angus, the clan Farquharson and their accomplices in the Braes of Mar, and other royalists in Badenoch, Lochaber, and Rannoch. The commission claimed that those named proved to be “intestine enemies” to the country and the “true” religion and awaited an opportunity to attack the Covenant regime or join the invaders. The fears of a royalist rising in the Central Highlands were presumably based on intelligence gathered that forces

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<sup>35</sup> *APS*, vi, i, 91.



were preparing to enter Scotland from Ireland and England and that the earl of Atholl and Lord Ogilvie were in communication with other leading royalists. Although there had been a long running feud between the Campbells and Ogilvies the situation was exacerbated by the fact that Ogilvie was royalist while the Campbells were Covenanters; thus the Covenanters were quick to employ the Campbells because of the hostile history between the two clans.<sup>36</sup> By the commission, the Earl of Argyll was ordered to pursue the royalists with fire and sword until they were subdued and “rooted out”, or gave assurance for their future good conduct. Argyll was further given the power to raise men in the sheriffdom of Argyll, and authority to require assistance from other shires if necessary.<sup>37</sup> The ratification and exoneration in favor of Argyll, recorded in the *Acts of Parliament* on 15 November 1641, reported that Argyll marched from 18 June to 2 August 1640, “Wherby the said erle of Athole and the men of athole and diverse other great clanes and otheres persones were brought to conformity”. The ratification and exoneration further declared that Argyll faithfully executed his commission and granted immunity to all those involved in the commission from any lawsuits, excusing the behavior of all those with Argyll, who was specifically to “be frie liberat and exonered of all and whatsomevir actione cleame questione and persute criminall or civeill whilkis may be intentit moved or persued againes the said erle”.<sup>38</sup> Not only does this commission illustrate the measures taken by central government to regain control over the central Highlands but it also highlights the role of the Earl of Argyll as a government agent for the Covenant Movement which was essential to his continued dominance through the entire Highlands.

No committees or commissions were ever issued on a regional basis for the Western Highlands and Isles, even though it was feared that the Earl of Antrim, Ranald MacDonnell, was planning to use the region as an entry point and launching pad for the royalist army. During the royalist victories under Montrose and MacColla blanket committees or commissions, such as the ones against the Northern and Central Highlands, were not issued in an attempt to punish or prevent

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<sup>36</sup> For details of the Campbell-Ogilvie feud see E. J. Cowan, “The Angus Campbells and the Origin of the Campbell-Ogilvie Feud”, *Scottish Studies*, 25 (1981), 25-38.

<sup>37</sup> HMC, Report IV, MSS of Earl of Argyll 491-2; Cowan, “The Angus Campbells and the Origin of the Campbell-Ogilvie Feud”, 25.

<sup>38</sup> *APS*, v, 398-9.



inhabitants of the Western Highlands and Isles from joining the royalist forces; rather, they were specifically against Montrose, MacColla and their chief officers.<sup>39</sup> This neglect of the region allowed the clans to operate independent from central government and without any hindrance to their actions allowed numerous clans to align themselves with the faction that would best serve their purpose, chiefly the royalists and the active opposition they took to the Clan Campbell.

During the Covenant Movement the appointments to committees and commissions that were applicable to the Western Highlands and Isles were nationwide. However, these national appointments still resulted in a limited involvement in national politics. Similar to the attempts made to enforce regional appointments, such as the Committee for Disturbances of the North, appointment to national committees and commissions proved difficult to enforce in the Western Highlands and Isles. The importance of mustering and maintenance for the Covenant army, as well as various committees and commissions, are clear examples of central government's inclusion of the region, but also of the region's disregard for their commissions.

Numerous orders were sent to the shires of Scotland in an attempt to organize opposition to the royalist forces, only a small number of which named the shires in the Western Highlands and Isles. An order issued on 1 December 1641 specifically named Perth, Dumbarton, Inverness, Argyll, Bute and the Braes of Stirling to levy 3,000 men of whom 1,000 were to be Highlanders for service in Ireland.<sup>40</sup> Similarly a "List of number of men out of shires" was compiled on 1 September 1643, requiring 2,000 foot and 120 horse out of the Earl of Seaforth's and Lord Lovat's division of Inverness, 1,600 foot and 120 horse, out of the Earl of Sutherland's part of Inverness and 1,200 foot to be levied out of the sheriffdoms of Argyll, Bute, and Dumbarton.<sup>41</sup> Following this levy order the Committee of Estates issued a "Proclamation to be in readiness" on 28 September 1643 dictating the dates and places for the aforementioned troops to muster; the Earl of Seaforth's and Lord Lovat's division of Inverness were ordered to meet at Chanonry of Ross on the 12<sup>th</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> The commissions against Montrose, MacColla, and their chief officers are discussed in the section V below.

<sup>40</sup> *RPC*, 2<sup>nd</sup> series, vii, 497.

<sup>41</sup> NAS, Parliamentary Papers, PA11/1/11v.



October, the Earl of Sutherland's division of Inverness and Caithness were to meet at Dornoch on the 17<sup>th</sup> October, and the levies out of the sheriffdoms of Argyll, Bute, and Dumbarton were to meet at Inveraray on the 10<sup>th</sup> October.<sup>42</sup> These orders illustrate that the government under the Covenanters had some success in levying troops in the early stages of the Covenant Movement; however, the shires involved in these orders were already under the superiority of Covenanters, such as Argyll, Seaforth and Sutherland, and prior to 1644 were not being encroached on by the Irish army and the emerging royalist faction.

The Covenant regime's difficulty in levying troops from the Western Highlands and Isles is evident in several documents between 1643 and 1651, primarily as a result of the actions of Montrose and MacColla and subsequent devastation caused by the royalist victories. The "Act anent companies out of Bute and Dumbarton" on 11 December 1643 was necessary to warrant and command the Marquis of Argyll to use all diligence in bringing out the required two companies of foot from Dumbarton and Bute.<sup>43</sup> Furthermore, there appeared to be problems with raising troops within Argyll. A letter from the Committee of Affairs of the Army sent to the Committee of War for Argyll claimed that they had no account from the shire of what "diligence" was being used to raise the two regiments required to be levied from Argyll. The letter requested an account of the shire's progress to be submitted no later than the 15<sup>th</sup> of April, as most shires were nearly ready to proceed.<sup>44</sup> Levying troops out of Argyllshire continued to be troublesome as is indicated in a letter to the Marquis of Argyll on 29 April 1651. The letter gave orders to Argyll to bring up forces raised in the northern shires and reported that neighboring troops were reluctant to enter service due to the fact that men from Argyll's lands in Lochaber had not come out and that the neighboring Highlanders would not leave their homes until the Lochabermen did for fear of raids. Because the Lochabermen had already made incursions into neighboring areas, the Committee requested an account from the Marquis of Argyll as to what diligence was being used in raising the levies in Argyllshire.<sup>45</sup> Clearly, these orders were

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<sup>42</sup> NAS, Parliamentary Papers, PA11/1/25v.

<sup>43</sup> NAS, Parliamentary Papers, PA11/1/93v.

<sup>44</sup> D. Stevenson (ed.), *The Government of Scotland under the Covenanters* (SHS, 1982), 117.

<sup>45</sup> Stevenson, (ed.), *The Government of Scotland*, 140.



difficult to enforce, even for Argyllshire, which due to the Marquis of Argyll had the strongest Covenanting ties in the Western Highlands and Isles. The complications involved in levying troops in Lochaber was simply due to the fact that a majority of “Lochabermen” were under the superiority of royalist chiefs, such as MacDonald of Keppoch, and would obviously be reluctant to join the opposition. Another possible explanation for this refractory behavior is the fact that Argyllshire was one of the areas worst affected by the royalist ravagings of 1644 and 1645 that resulted in a great deal of territorial devastation and financial hardship, thus making it difficult for the shire to afford to levy the necessary troops.

Most documents pertaining to mustering troops in response to the imminent arrival of the Irish were not addressed to the shires of the Western Highlands and Isles even though the region was seen to be the point of entry and would have been the Covenanters’ first line of defense. Instructions to the shires to levy troops sent on 24 November 1643 in response to the threat of an invasion from Ireland were not sent to any of the shires in the Western Highlands and Isles although the instructions pointed to the region as the prime target of the Irish invasion.<sup>46</sup> As the royalist military campaign under Montrose and MacColla gained momentum a series of orders and proclamations was issued. Although the “Proclamation for raising the country against rebels” issued on 2 September 1644 claimed to be raising the “country” it was clearly meant to raise the Lowlands. The proclamation stated that the Committee of Estates had received word that Montrose and MacColla were within fourteen miles of Stirling and were intending to “surprise” the town; therefore it was found necessary to command all those between sixteen and sixty to march towards Stirling within twenty days of the proclamation. The Committee ordered the proclamation to be sent to the following lowland sheriffdoms: Edinburgh, Haddington, Linlithgow, Teviotdale, Peebles, Lanark, Ayr, Renfrew, with the inclusion of only Dunbarton from the Western Highlands.<sup>47</sup> Furthermore, an order to the shires sent on 23 September 1644 required all shires to be put in a position of arms as the Committee had received word that the “rebels” were moving southward and it was found “needful” that the entire country begin exercising and training;

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<sup>46</sup> NAS, Parliamentary Papers, PA11/1/68r.

<sup>47</sup> NAS, Parliamentary Papers, PA11/3/40v-41r.



again, the order was not sent to the Western Highlands and Isles.<sup>48</sup> The fact that the levying of troops during the most needed time was not accomplished indicates that, in regards to the mustering of “Lochabermen”, the autonomy of the Clan Donald was stronger than the influence of central government and that the exclusion of the shires from the region in the 1644 proclamations shows government’s continued belief in the irrelevance of the Western Highlands and Isles.

Similar to levying troops, the lifting of a maintenance proved to be a nearly impossible task within the Western Highlands and Isles. Only a limited amount of financial support was raised in the region between 1644 and 1651. Explanation for this is the financial hardships created by the royalist victories combined with the reluctance of many to act against their royalist chiefs. According to “Ane list of bonds given be the committee of Estatis to those persons who lent money for supplee of the armies in England and Ireland” no bonds were issued to men from the Western Highlands and Isles with the exception of Argyll in March 1644.<sup>49</sup>

In an attempt to counter the royalist victories between 1644 and 1645 the Committee of Estates issued an “Act anent Maintenance of the Army” on 27 February 1645. The act ordered every burgh and shire to “entertain” a proportion of forces between 1 March and 31 August 1645 in response to the invasion of Irish rebels. The act included a roll of the necessary forces and monthly maintenance dictating what each burgh and shire was to raise. Out of the 30 shires covering both the Lowlands and the Highlands, the nine shires representing the north were to provide the following: for the shires of Inverness, 464 men and £945, Caithness, 105 men and £945, Cromarty, 11 men and £99, Sutherland, 47 men and £423, Nairn, 35 men and £315, Elgin, 210 men and £1,890, Dunbarton, 137 men and £1,233, Argyll, 323 men and £2,907, Bute 51 men and £459, and the burgh of Inverness 40 men and £360.<sup>50</sup> However, a review of the “Accompt of Sir Adam Hepburn” who was treasurer for the Covenanting army reveals that the act was not adhered to by many shires, especially those of the Western Highlands and Isles. The “Account of money restand by the shires”, 1 August 1646, lists monies owed by the shires and burghs for the period of 1 March 1645 to 1 August 1646 in accordance with the act issued by

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<sup>48</sup> NAS, Parliamentary Papers, PA11/3/58r-58v.

<sup>49</sup> NAS, Parliamentary Papers, PA11/1/251r-259r.

<sup>50</sup> *APS*, vi, i, 170.



the Estates. Calculating the sum owed by each shire for the seventeen months which Hepburn was concerned with it appears that a number of shires in the Lowlands made at least partial payments on their maintenance bills. For example, the total owed by the shire and burgh of Ayr totaled £109,395 and their outstanding debt according to Hepburn's calculation was £73,470 13s. 4d.; therefore, between March 1645 and August 1646 Ayr made payments totaling close to £36,000. However, according to the sums entered by Sir Adam Hepburn none of the nine shires representing the north had made any payments toward their maintenance debt: Inverness owed £78,948, Sutherland owed £7,191, Cromarty owed £1,683, Caithness owed £16,065, Argyll owed £49,419, Bute owed £8,568, Nairn owed £5,967, and Elgin owed £36,108.<sup>51</sup>

Similar problems arose in the attempts to collect victuals to support the army. As a result, a commission to buy victuals was issued to Alexander Bower of Dundee and William Marshall, writer, on 4 April 1651. As the king and committee understood that Alexander Bower of Dundee was employed in raising "the forty days' loan" Bower, with the addition of William Marshall, was granted all powers necessary to uplift the loans along with eight months' maintenance from the shires of Elgin, Nairn, Inverness, Caithness, Cromarty, and Sutherland.<sup>52</sup> This push for raising victuals and supplies was expanded into the Central and Western Highlands in letters addressed to "the shires north of the Forth" on 5 April 1651 as it was decided by "king and committee" that, having surveyed the provisions, they were found insufficient. Therefore, the "committee" was forced to utilize personal estates and fortunes for supply of victuals, and gave the shires the option to supply victuals or maintenance and forces. The shires were then ordered to report the number of forces and how much money or victuals they would be sending. The shires of Fife, Perth and Angus were given until the 15<sup>th</sup> of April to report, while the shires of Kincardine, Aberdeen, Clackmannan and Argyllshire were to report by the 22<sup>nd</sup> of April.<sup>53</sup> As with the problems faced in levying troops in the Western Highlands and Isles, the independence of many of the royalist chiefs combined with the financial

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<sup>51</sup> C.S. Terry (ed.), *Papers Relating to the Army of the Solemn League and Covenant, 1643-1647*, 2 vols. (SHS, 1917), ii, 412. No sum was provided for Dunbarton.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

<sup>53</sup> Terry, (ed.), *Papers Relating to the Army*, ii, 116.

ramifications of the royalists' victories were key factors in the noncompliance with the commissions and the region continued to function independent from central government.

One interesting commission issued by the Covenant regime that did not pertain to the army but was likewise difficult to enforce was the Justiciary Commission. The "Appointment of Justiciary Commission for suppression of crime in Highlands" created on 3 December 1641 stated that the King and parliament thought expedient to establish circuit courts to handle malefactors and delinquents, especially within the Highlands. The Privy Council concurred with the decision to establish the circuit courts and appointed deputies in ten sheriffdoms including Dunbarton, Stirling, Perth, Forfar, Aberdeen, Banff, Elgin, and Inverness. The appointments were a mix of royalists and covenanters including the Earl of Atholl, the Marquis of Huntly and George, Lord Gordon.<sup>54</sup> As the commission was intended to deal with the crimes in the Highlands it is interesting that the Covenant regime chose to appoint the Earl of Atholl and members of the Clan Gordon because they were responsible for the risings in the Central Highlands and the northeast. The poor choice of commissioners made by the Privy Council was soon evident as the Estates was forced to send demands to various commissioners to perform their duties as Justiciary Commissioners. A "Charge to Commissioners of Justiciary in the Highlands to attend justice court" was issued 23 February 1643, after the Estates was informed that services had been neglected through non-attendance of the commissioners. A list of thirty commissioners was compiled and all were ordered to attend the justice court on the 11<sup>th</sup> of April. The delinquent commissioners were instructed to concur and assist the rest of the commissioners and were not to leave court until all the commissioners consented to the conclusion of business. Due to the risings in the Central Highlands and northeast it should come as no surprise that among those listed as absent commissioners were the Marquis of Huntly, Lord Gordon, Robert Farquharson of Invercauld, and the Earl of Seaforth, who by 1643 had already begun to waver in his support for the Covenant.<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> *RPC*, 2<sup>nd</sup> series, vii, 165.

<sup>55</sup> *RPC*, 2<sup>nd</sup> series, vii, 398.



## V

Central government's direct involvement with the Western Highlands and Isles during the Covenant Movement was an isolated response to the territorial devastation committed by the royalist forces. The majority of sources available illustrate the Covenant regime's focus on assistance to the shires devastated by Montrose and MacColla's army and consequential proclamations and acts against the "chief actors" of the rebellion. However, the focus on punishing those involved in the royalist risings appears to have been secondary to the Covenanters' schemes for assistance because after Montrose and MacColla departed, for Holland and Ireland respectively, a number of royalists laid down their weapons and returned home.

The areas that suffered the most territorial devastation, thus requiring the greatest amount of aid, were Argyll and Highland Perthshire. MacColla and his Irish forces targeted these areas because of the dominance of the Campbells there. As a result they spoiled every township in Argyll and were able to persuade Montrose to quarter royalist troops in Perthshire for the winter of 1644. In November 1644 the Covenanting Parliament confirmed that the royalists had devastated eighteen parishes in Argyll and Breadalbane alone.<sup>56</sup> In response to the royalists' destruction, the Covenanter's assistance and relief scheme was established primarily to aid Argyllshire, but included all those "harried" by the rebels.

One aspect of assistance provided by central government is seen in the "Proclamation anent persons herryed be the enemies" on 13 December 1644. The proclamation stated that the Committee of Estates had taken it into their consideration how many people had been pursued by "unnaturall countriemen and yrish rebells" of whom many had their homes burnt, lands wasted, and crops destroyed. The devastation was so severe that the Committee of Estates declared that every gentleman who had been attacked by rebels and was willing to take service would have employment in the army according to their "conditions and abilities".<sup>57</sup> Added to this guarantee of employment were numerous allowances and

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<sup>56</sup> Macinnes, *Clanship, Commerce and the House of Stuart*, 104.

<sup>57</sup> NAS, Parliamentary Papers, PA11/3/133r-133v.

funds granted to various Covenanters and districts. For example, the Covenanted leadership ordered the commissary to pay Lord Frendraught £400 Sterling on 30 October 1645 with the understanding that his “great suffering” by the rebels would prevent him from continuing his “faithful service”.<sup>58</sup> Similar allowances were made to Campbell of Glenorchy and the chief of Clan Menzies when Glenorchy was advanced £10,000 Sterling and promised a further £5,000 Sterling in reparations two months later, and both Glenorchy and Menzies were exempt from the required troop levy for the Army of the Engagement. Finally, the Covenanters’ assistance and relief scheme established a limited fund for Breadalbane to aid widows and orphans in January 1647.<sup>59</sup>

Relief for Argyllshire was more immediate due to the Marquis of Argyll’s political dominance within the Covenant regime. Through Argyll’s persistence the government dispatched substantial quantities of malt and meal to Argyllshire at the outset of 1646 to the value of £18,500.<sup>60</sup> According to the accounts of Sir Adam Hepburn, 2,500 bolls of meal bought for the provision of forces in Ireland were instead to be employed for the relief of Skipness, Campbell of Ardkinglass’s regiment, and for supply of the ministers of Argyll, totaling £20,833 6s 8d.<sup>61</sup> Subsequent accounts on 11 August 1646 record a “discharge to distressed ministers of Argyll”, namely Mr. Evan Cameron and Mr. Dougall Duroch, for their “relief and subsistence” totaling £2,000, and an order for the “transportation of meal to the distressed people of Argyll” of 40 chalders of meal to be imported from Mr. Rodger Mowatt.<sup>62</sup> By the outset of 1647, the Marquis of Argyll was also able to get all public dues payable out of Argyllshire suspended and to get reparations granted, £15,000 Sterling to Argyll himself and a total of £20,000 Sterling to be divided among the other landowners in Argyllshire.<sup>63</sup>

In analyzing the schemes employed by the Covenanters to assist those affected by the royalist victories it is clear that aid was given not for humanitarian reasons but in order to maintain the strength of the Covenant Movement. The offer

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<sup>58</sup> Stevenson, (ed.), *The Government of Scotland*, 21.

<sup>59</sup> Macinnes, *Clanship, Commerce and the House of Stuart*, 105.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid.

<sup>61</sup> Terry, (ed.), *Papers Relating to the Army*, ii, 403.

<sup>62</sup> Terry, (ed.), *Papers Relating to the Army*, ii, 395.

<sup>63</sup> Macinnes, *Clanship, Commerce and the House of Stuart*, 105.



of employment for those “harried” was clearly intended not only to assist the sufferers but to enlarge the Covenanting army. Similarly, in looking at the monetary aid given to Lord Frendraught, the Committee of Estates specifically stated that the aid was provided to allow him to continue his service for the cause. Even though showing charity as a religious group may have been enough to persuade some to align with the Covenanters, no assistance was provided to those who suffered devastations at the hands of the Covenanters, regardless of whether they were royalists or neutral.

Documents that survive from the period of the royalist victories show that the Covenant regime’s reaction was still not directed at the region responsible, namely the Western Highlands and Isles. Rather, the punishments issued by central government were concerned more with those seen as traitors or Irish officers than with the common man who went in arms under his superior. The harshest actions taken by the Covenant regime were seen in a series of proclamations and acts between 1644 and 1646. On 12 September 1644 a proclamation was issued against Montrose for his insurrections. The proclamation stated that Montrose had cast off all fear of God, respect and loyalty to his native kingdom, pressed new oaths contrary to the Covenants, and threatened all those who refused to comply with immediate death. It was ordered by the Committee of Estates that no subject was to reset, supply or “intercommune” with Montrose. The proclamation ended with a £20,000 bounty and pardon for all bygone actions during the rebellion to anyone who apprehended Montrose and presented him before The Committee of Estates, dead or alive.<sup>64</sup> A similar proclamation to the one against Montrose was issued against Alasdair MacColla only this proclamation was more concerned with the amount of violence and bloodshed done by MacColla and the Irish than any transgressions of loyalty and religion. Therefore on 17 September 1644 a £20,000 bounty was placed on MacColla’s head along with the promise of a pardon to the person who brought him before the Committee.<sup>65</sup> Clearly, the promise of a pardon was intended to entice Montrose and MacColla’s own men to turn them in; however

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<sup>64</sup> NAS, Parliamentary Papers, PA11/3/46r-46v.

<sup>65</sup> NAS, Parliamentary Papers, PA11/3/50v-51r.



their plan failed since MacColla was able to escape to Ireland and Montrose was not apprehended until 1650, not by one of his own but by Donald MacLeod of Assynt.<sup>66</sup>

The fact that the Covenant regime was primarily interested in prosecuting the ringleaders of the royalist faction is magnified in their dealings with the Irish officers of MacColla's army. A warrant to Edinburgh Castle to hang Irish officers was issued on 16 October 1645, which ordered the constable of Edinburgh Castle to transport Colonel Manus Roe O'Cahan and Major Thomas Laghton to Castlehill and hang them on the 20<sup>th</sup> of October.<sup>67</sup> The actions taken by the Covenanters against the royalists can be seen as justifiable in light of the excessive devastation caused by MacColla's forces, but what is most interesting is the position they took when dealing with those who were not classified as inciters of the rebellion.

In looking at the Committee of Estates' dealings with the men of Atholl and other accomplices to the royalist forces the actions are of a more subtle nature. In the Committee of Estates instructions to the Earl of Tullibardine and Lord Burleigh on 28 September 1644, it was stated that a large group of men from Atholl had offered to leave the rebel army and return home. As a result, Tullibardine and Lord Burleigh were to offer full pardons to the rebels in Atholl if they agreed to provide intelligence of the royalists' campaign, with the exception of those who were deemed to be officers and "chief actors". Interestingly, the instructions specified that if the rebels would not cooperate because of the omission of the officers in the pardon then Tullibardine was authorized to divide the "chief actors" and give some of them pardons, and if that was still not sufficient he was authorized to give pardons to all ranks.<sup>68</sup> As these instructions were sent during the height of the royalist campaign it is clear that the Committee of Estates was willing to do whatever was necessary to hinder the royalists even if that meant issuing pardons to "chief actors"; Tullibardine and Burleigh were essentially ordered to do whatever it took to get the Athollmen to lay down their weapons and go home.

Another interesting document among the Supplementary Parliament Papers is a draft of a transportation order estimated to be written sometime between July

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<sup>66</sup> E. Furgol, "The Northern Highland Covenanter Clans, 1639-1651", *Northern Scotland*, vol. 7 (Aberdeen, 1987), 199-231, at p. 122.

<sup>67</sup> Stevenson, (ed.), *The Government of Scotland*, 5.

<sup>68</sup> NAS, Parliamentary Papers, PA11/3/63v.



and September 1646. Although it is merely a draft there is a clear change in the tone in which it is written when contrasted with the markedly hostile tone of the bounties issued on Montrose and MacColla and the warrant to execute the Irish officers. The draft states that James Graham, Marquis of Montrose, Lord Lodovick, Lord Lindsay, Alisdair MacColla, and General Major Weir are exempt from all pardons except for the benefit of safe transportation, never to return without warrant from parliament. The draft also promises to give full assurance of their lives and fortunes to all landed men who were currently or had been involved in the rebellion, on the condition that they lay down their arms immediately and return home.<sup>69</sup> This document appears to expose the Covenant regime's desperation to end the "troubles"; they had no intention to prosecute those involved in the rebellion as long as they were peaceful again and were willing to give safe transportation to the ringleaders of the royalist army.

After the defeat of the royalist forces at Philiphaugh in 1645 and the subsequent massacre of most Irish officers, the Covenant government became increasingly concerned with those seen as traitors. In 1646, the Committee on Public Affairs imposed enormous fines on many royalists, targeting anyone who had shifted their allegiance to the royalists during the campaign of Montrose. As a result sixteen Mackenzies were ordered to "lend" a total of £28,666 13s 4d. to the Covenanting government. These loans were actually just a nice way to say fines, and the breakdown of these fines show that the Committee went easier on others than on Mackenzies because of their perceived treacherous shifts in allegiance.<sup>70</sup>

Further evidence that the Covenant regime was concerned with those who surprised the leadership and aligned with the opposition is seen in their response to those who took part in the Engagement. The "Act against officers involved in the late rebellion and Engagement" issued by the Committee of Dispatches on 29 January 1649 was aimed at Covenanting officers in the various garrisons throughout Scotland who aided or joined the "rebels". The Committee of Dispatches ruled that officers who took part in either the royalist "rebellion" or the Engagement were no

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<sup>69</sup> NAS, PA7/4/11.

<sup>70</sup> A. Mackenzie, *History of the Clan MacKenzie with Genealogies of the Principal Families* (Inverness, 1879), 192. However, these fines were deemed unobtainable in Easter and Wester Ross; Macinnes, *Clanship, Commerce and the House of Stuart*, 91.



longer permitted to stay or reside in any garrison. They were to remove themselves from the garrisons within forty-eight hours and failure to do so would result in imprisonment “until further course be taken against them by parliament or the committee”.<sup>71</sup>

The Committee of Estates’ attacks on their own officers are understandable in light of the difficulty of winning a war when you do not know who the enemies are. It was obvious to all involved in the Scottish “troubles” that a large number of Highlanders, such as the MacDonalds and Gordons, were royalists, but the regime was caught off guard when men in their own ranks joined the opposition. As seen in the “loans” required from the Mackenzies and the Act against the officers within the Covenant garrisons, those who could no longer be trusted had to be removed from positions of power and severely punished in order to maintain the integrity of the Covenant Movement.

Central government’s understanding that participation in the rebellions varied and was the result of multiple influences is seen in the 1646 Act of Classes. This established guidelines for punishments handed down to those found delinquent but who were not to be executed. The delinquents were put into three classifications depending on the level of their involvement; however, this did not include most officers or ringleaders as they were either massacred or executed immediately after Philiphaugh, so it was only applicable to the lesser players in the rebellion. The first classification consisted of those who were at Philiphaugh or received commissions from rebels, thus was aimed at the junior officers and constituted the highest offense. The Act of Classes ordered those in this classification to be fined four to six years’ rent and discharged from all offices. The second class comprised those who raised “Horse or Foot”, those who furnished the rebels with arms, and anyone who stayed with the rebels for twenty-four hours or longer. This group of delinquents was fined two to four years’ rent and suspended from all offices. In the Covenanters’ dealings with those deemed to be in the third classification government’s leniency came into play. Those who “intercomoured” with Montrose and MacColla, exchanged intelligence, or provided money to the royalists would be in the lowest grouping of delinquents. The act recommended the third classification to be fined one-half to

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<sup>71</sup> Stevenson, (ed.), *The Government of Scotland*, 86.



two years' rent. However, it was left to the judges to decide on the punishment based on whether or not those brought forward as delinquents acted against the Covenant merely for their own protection and not out of disloyalty to the cause. Therefore, the opportunity existed to avoid being fined and being suspended from office if it could be proven that their actions were out of self-preservation.

Aside from the fact that this act showed leniency to some delinquents the locations chosen for the proclamation to be read also reveals that the Estates were not concerned with those from the Western Highlands and Isles. The act was only read in Edinburgh, Perth, Dundee, Aberdeen, Stirling, St. Andrews, and Glasgow.<sup>72</sup> As the Covenant regime was strongest in the southern burghs, the choice of these locations emphasizes the Estates' concern with those seen as traitors to the cause or anyone close enough to the center of government who could pose a threat to the regime, both conditions implying that the Western Highlands and Isles in general were exempt.

## VI

A key element to the success of the royalist victories between 1644 and 1645 was the fact that the Covenanting government relied solely on the Clan Campbell network, and failed to exploit the tensions and rivalries within local politics to its own advantage, whereas Montrose realized the value of local politics when harnessed for a national cause. Although the Covenanters were afraid of an invasion of Irish forces sent by the Earl of Antrim they made no attempt to recruit his possible accomplices, nor did they make any strong attempts to prevent the Highlanders on the seaboard from joining. Instead, defense of the western seaboard remained solely reliant on the Clan Campbell network. Montrose and MacColla were the first to employ the region using the existing clan networks that formed the foundation for their local politics. By utilizing the region's hostilities amongst clans, and particularly the numerous clans' animosity towards the Marquis of Argyll, Montrose and MacColla were able to employ the clans almost as mercenaries,

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<sup>72</sup> *APS*, vi, I, 203-4.

partaking in the “troubles” for their own benefit and with the intention to destroy the Clan Campbell.

A critical mistake made by the Covenant regime was their neglect in enlisting those who subscribed to the National Covenant to actively support the cause. Had the Covenanters attempted to entice the clans with land and booty seized from royalists, similar to the tactics used by Montrose and MacColla, it is quite possible that the lines of allegiance would have been drawn differently. Instead of building on the support implied in the subscription to the Covenant cause, the Committee of Estates attempted to counter opposition to the Covenant by establishing committees and commissions to deal with the Highlands on a regional, case by case basis; however, there were no committees or commissions directed specifically at the Western Highlands and Isles to prevent a rebellion or to thwart royalist recruitment in the region. The question remains then, why did the government under the Covenanters neglect to involve the Western Highlands and Isles?

One of the prime reasons was the Covenant regime’s reliance on the Marquis of Argyll and the Clan Campbell network. After the fall of the Lordship of the Isles in 1493, royal authority over the region was entrusted to the Gordons, Mackenzies, and Campbells. According to Dr. Jane Dawson, “After 1493 royal authority was exercised in the Isles but only at one remove through the use of proxies from among the Highland clans. The Campbells, the Gordons, and the Mackenzies were entrusted with the task of enforcing the crown’s will throughout the Highlands and Islands. These clans were all based on the mainland and used their position as royal agents to extend their own influence out over the Isles as well as that of their sovereign”.<sup>73</sup> By the outbreak of the Bishops’ Wars, the Clan Campbell had extended their power over the region to such an extent that the Marquis of Argyll’s authority and high ranking within the Covenant regime placed him in a position that allowed him to act almost as a second monarch. Therefore, when the Western Highlands and Isles needed to be dealt with the Covenant regime left the task in the hands of “Prince Argyll” as is seen in his defense of the western seaboard, begun in

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<sup>73</sup>J. Dawson, “The Origins of the ‘Road to the Isles’: Trade, Communications and Campbell Power in Early Modern Scotland”, R. Mason & N. Macdougall (eds.), *People and Power in Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1992), 96.



1639, and in a letter to the Earl of Seaforth stating that the Estates had referred his request to stay in the north to Argyll as lieutenant of the region.<sup>74</sup>

A second reason for central government's neglect of the Western Highlands and Isles during the "troubles" was the fact that the region was too far removed from the hotbed of the conflict. The Covenant issues were seen to primarily involve the south-west, Lothian, and Fife and had nothing to do with subjects beyond the Highland Line. Although the Covenant regime did attempt to gain the region's subscription to the National Covenant and later Solemn League and Covenant, few of those who subscribed were employed in the Covenanters' service. The bulk of involvement from those who subscribed was through appointments to Committees of War for their shire. Even though the fighting men from the Western Highlands and Isles were known throughout Europe for their exceptional military competence during the Thirty Years' War, only a handful were actually given commissions and employed as officers in the Covenanting army. Again, this can be attributed to the fact that the region was seen to have little vested interest in the issues revolving around the Covenant Movement.

This decline of government interaction and resulting neglect of the Western Highlands and Isles can be traced back to the beginning of Charles I's reign. By no longer forcing the chiefs to appear before the Privy Council and to be held accountable for their behavior, central government allowed the region to revert to a local rather than national mentality, thus making it difficult to enforce national committees and commissions. The increase in autonomy that resulted from central government's neglect of the region allowed the clans to once again function independent from central government and forced the clans to look for other avenues by which to maintain or increase their political status in the region. Therefore, once the Western Highlands and Isles slipped out of central government's grasp the stage was set for alliances and rivalries to take priority in the patterns of allegiances and the region's involvement in the Covenant Movement.

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<sup>74</sup> NAS, Parliamentary Papers, PA11/3/24v-25v.

## Chapter 5

### Religion from Reformation to War

We have also had to encounter many perils, besides those I have related, in the Highlands, where there are more zealous and constant Catholics to be found in the space of three miles than in some entire provinces of the kingdom.<sup>1</sup>

*Annual letter to the Superior General of the Society of Jesus,  
1632*

As the cause of the Covenant Movement was purported to be open opposition to the alterations to the Church of Scotland an assessment of the religious situation in the Western Highlands and Isles is clearly relevant. When attempting to understand the allegiances of the clans a primary question is whether or not religion played a role in the loyalties of the clans in the Western Highlands and Isles. In order to answer this question the strength and influence which the Church of Scotland and the Catholic Irish Franciscan missionaries wielded over the inhabitants must be determined. Therefore, this chapter will examine religion on the local level and looks at the state of both religious organizations from the point of view of the inhabitants rather than from Edinburgh or Dublin. Taking this perspective of religion raises secondary questions such as whether or not there was a satisfactory clergy and regular religious services provided by either the Protestants or Catholics. By gleaning information from the records of the Church of Scotland and the Synod of Argyll an understanding of the issues associated with the spread and preservation of the Protestant religion, and subsequent Covenant Movement, in the Western Highlands and Isles can emerge. Likewise, critical analysis of the reports of the Irish Franciscan missionaries and the Church of Scotland's reaction to them helps provide some indications as to the size, strengths and weaknesses of the Catholic presence in the region.

The reformed Church of Scotland faced numerous hurdles in its attempt to spread Protestantism through the Western Highlands and Isles. The Western

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<sup>1</sup> W. Forbes Leith (ed.), *Memoirs of Scottish Catholics during the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> Centuries* (London, 1909), 147.



Highland and Isles' parishes, in general, lacked ministers for more than half a century after the Reformation; the first appointment to a Hebridean parish was not until 1609. One of the contributing factors to the lack of ministers was the language barrier which resulted from the local inhabitants being native Gaelic speakers and the majority of the reformed clergy being either English or Scots speaking. Another hindrance to the Kirk's effort to establish a strong Protestant foundation in the region was the hostile geography and its effect on providing ministers and maintaining a regular attendance at church services. The shortage of ministers and the inaccessibility of the Western Highlands and Isles allowed Catholicism to linger and created an opportunity for pilgrimages to Ireland, amongst the Islanders, to maintain their connection with Catholicism. A 1615 report on the religious state of the island of Islay claimed "that the religioun that the cuntrie pepill has heir amongst them is Popishe".<sup>2</sup> With a few exceptions, ecclesiastical affiliation was determined by intermittent missionary activities by both Catholics and Protestants.

The Reformation in the Highlands faced numerous challenges as the impact of the first generation of reformed ministry began to lessen. The early Highland ministers lacked the main instruments of evangelism: there was no vernacular catechism prior to 1653, no vernacular psalm book until 1659, and no regular kirk sessions until well into the seventeenth century. According to one view of the Reformation, "The result was that in many respects the progress of the Reformed Church after 1560 depended on a series of local reformations, each moving at its own pace and with its own distinctive problems to surmount."<sup>3</sup> This was clearly the situation throughout the Highlands as there were complaints as late as the 1690s that there were more Catholic priests than Protestant ministers in the region.<sup>4</sup>

Preliminary remarks to a report from the Irish Franciscan missionaries to their superiors highlighted the problems faced in spreading religion through the Western Highlands and Isles, problems which were applicable to both the spread of Catholicism and the Reformed Kirk. According to the report which was meet with some skepticism there was a vast potential harvest but few priests to attend to it, the

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<sup>2</sup> As quoted in I.B. Cowan, *Regional Aspects of the Scottish Reformation* (London, 1978), 34.

<sup>3</sup> M. Lynch, "Calvinism in Scotland, 1559-1638", in M. Prestwich (ed.), *International Calvinism 1541-1715* (Oxford, 1985), 229.

<sup>4</sup> M. Lynch, *Scotland: A New History* (London, 1997), 363.



territory was a difficult place to live in, and the inhabitants had a greater taste for military exploits. Two chief complaints from the missionaries explain the primary difficulties in establishing any form of religion in the region: inaccessibility and a language barrier. The issue of inaccessibility was claimed to be the reason why many inhabitants were uneducated and why the region had been overlooked by the Catholic Church for at least the past 60 years. Hopes for a successful mission were founded on the language barrier between the Gaelic-speaking Western Highlands and the rest of Scotland. As the report stated, “there is nobody near them who knows their Gaelic tongue”.<sup>5</sup> Therefore, the Gaelic-speaking Irish Franciscans hoped to be able to penetrate the region and counteract the influence of the Scots or English speaking Protestant ministers

Information regarding religion in the Highlands, especially the Western Highlands and Isles, is mostly derived from the upper stratum of Highland society. The religious practices of the common people are relatively unknown; therefore, in many cases information needs to be deduced from the data provided by the elite class.<sup>6</sup> There is little doubt that religious customs varied from place to place and time to time due to the diversity of the obstacles within particular regions, for example, the inaccessibility of many parts of the Highlands. Due to the remoteness of Lewis there is no evidence or indication before 1610 that the inhabitants had had the benefit of spiritual guidance. According to the account of Colin MacKenzie of Kintail’s visit to the island of Lewis in 1610, he was accompanied by Monsignor Fearchar. While Colin was attempting to gain secular authority over the island it was reported that Fearchar married people who had been cohabiting for years, baptized people fifty years old, and had to baptize the locals at random by using a sprig of heather to sprinkle them with holy water. It was also reported that some in Lewis still observed non-Christian rites as late as the 1690s which raises the question of the effectiveness of the Reformation and the post-Reformation attempts to spread religion in the region. According to a report on the Western Highlands and Isles by Martin Martin, people in Lewis were sacrificing to Shony, a sea-spirit, and

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<sup>5</sup> C. Giblin (ed.), *Irish Franciscan Mission to Scotland, 1616-1646: Documents from Roman Archives* (Dublin, 1964), 47.

<sup>6</sup> T. McCaughey, “Protestantism and Scottish Highland Culture”, in J.P. Mackey (ed.), *An Introduction to Celtic Christianity* (Edinburgh, 1989), 187.



maintained numerous customs associated particularly with seasonal festivals. The non-Christian customs of the inhabitants of Lewis appear to have survived a reformation which was initially an upper-class affair and had little effect on the lives of ordinary clanspeople,<sup>7</sup> and were, thus, allowed to flourish because of the Church of Scotland's inability to provide a satisfactory ministry.

However, these accounts of the state of religion in the region, along with those provided by the Church of Scotland and the Irish Franciscan missionaries, raise a question as to their historical accuracy due to the potential propaganda agendas of the two religions. As will be seen throughout this chapter, many of the reports from both Protestants and Catholics are pessimistic and paint a very bleak picture. Although the specific details can be questioned as possible exaggerations laced with pessimism, such as the shortage of supplies and maintenance for the Irish Franciscans or the number of ministers provided to parishes in the isles, the fact that the same point is found repeatedly throughout their respective reports indicates there were definite obstacles to overcome but the exact degree of severity is open to discussion.

What is a known fact is that the reign of Charles I was faced with liturgical and doctrinal division within the Church of Scotland. These divisions in the Kirk were further complicated by the fact that it had difficulties in establishing a strong Protestant foundation in the Western Highlands and Isles. In a letter from Charles I to the Privy Council of Scotland in 1631 he relayed a report from the Bishop of the Isles regarding the state of his diocese. According to this letter:

...Johne Bischope of the Iles hath represented us the great barbaritie used among the Ilanders of his Diocie, and how there is no ordour amongst them for encreasing ather of religoun or civill policie; and notwithstanding that ther ar articles condescended upon tuitching that purpois (none of them as we ar informed being observed) yit ther is no punischment inflicted upon delinquents:--Our pleasure is that having appointed a day in April or May ensuing, you call the chief men amongst them befor yow and by the advises of the said Bischope, that yow use your best meanes for establishing religioun and government according to the effect abonespecifeit...and if yow find that by that meanes yow cannot effectuat the same, that then yow detene them with yow until we ourselft shall come to that our

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<sup>7</sup> McCaughey, "Protestantism and Scottish Highland Culture", 188.



kingdome, that we may caus proceid therin as we shall find most requisite.<sup>8</sup>

It is apparent through this letter that the conditions of both the Statutes of Iona and the 1616 Regulations were thought to be no longer adhered to by the island chiefs. According to the agreement reached on Iona and echoed in the 1616 Regulations the island chiefs accepted the responsibility to provide for the ministry in their territory, to obey the clergy, rebuild churches and to keep the Sabbath. As indicated by Charles's orders to the Privy Council the chiefs were deemed delinquent in their religious duties as reported by the Bishop of the Isles to Charles. Furthermore, comments made in regards to "civill policie" indicate that the chiefs were further negligent in the civil components of both the Statutes of Iona and, more importantly, the 1616 Regulations. Although it is not clear which aspects of the 1616 Regulations regarding civil obedience the chiefs were accused of ignoring the fact that Charles's instructions to the Privy Council were based on a letter from the bishop indicates a connection between religious piety and civil duty. However, based on the attendance records of the annual meetings, it appears that the Bishop of the Isles's claims were not taken seriously by the chiefs nor the Privy Council as none of the chiefs attended. In 1631 six of the chiefs were granted excuses from attendance while only three were fined for non-compliance, while in 1632 only MacLeod of Dunvegan attended and the other seven were excused.<sup>9</sup> As the Western Highlands and Isles were still relatively peaceful and excuses from attendance were granted it is quite likely that the report to Charles was an exaggeration on the part of the bishop in an attempt to increase the church's revenue since the chiefs' appearance would most likely result in fines being issued which the bishop would then claim. Whatever the motive was behind the report and Charles's subsequent instructions to the Privy Council the idea that there were troubles enforcing religious and civil policies prompted the General Assembly in 1638 to make specific provisions for the establishment of religion in the region.

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<sup>8</sup> *Collectanea de Rebus Albanicis* (Iona Club, 1848), 127.

<sup>9</sup> See Appendix 5 "Attendance Record of Annual Meetings 1616-1642".

## I

From the time of the Reformation it was realized that the nobility would be the key factor in spreading the Reformed Kirk. As the nobility was essential in maintaining law and order it was assumed by reformed ministers that they could be counted on to implement sweeping ecclesiastical reforms. Some chiefs were genuinely committed to reform, but understanding the constraints of their kin-based society they wished to achieve reform by working within the existing frameworks of Highland society. Furthermore, in lieu of parish schools, the noble household became the locus, in many cases, for education creating a second means by which to spread the faith. As a result, an essential component of ecclesiastical organization within the Highlands was the noble retinue, or tour, which served to supplement or replace the parish as a primary local unit of religious organization.<sup>10</sup>

During the reign of James VI, the Kirk had been able to establish at least a presence in most Highland parishes on the mainland. However, just as the rest of the kingdom was dividing over religious doctrine so too was the Highlands; the difference being rather than a schism developing between moderate and more radical strands of Protestantism, the Highlands included the division between Protestantism and Catholicism. The Kirk could increasingly count on support from Highland families such as the Munros of Foulis, Rosses of Balnagown, MacKenzies of Kintail, Mackintoshes of Dunachton, Frasers, as well as the various branches of Clan Campbell. Conversely, opposition came from Catholic households such as the various branches of the House of Gordon, including the cadet branches of the Earl of Huntly, the MacDonalds of Keppoch, MacDonalds of Glengarry, and Clanranald. This division in the north emphasized the Kirk's need to breach the Highland Line and provide a competent ministry in the territory.

The spread of Protestantism through noble retinues is best seen in the tours of the various branches of Clan Campbell through their Highland territories. Major Campbell households moved constantly between a series of residences carrying Protestant worship throughout their estates. These tours were able to reach remote

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<sup>10</sup> J. Dawson, "Clan, Kin and Kirk: the Campbells and the Scottish Reformation", in N.S. Amos, et al. (eds.), *The Education of a Christian Society* (Aldershot, 1999), 229.



places which were previously without access to Reformed services, resulting in many of the lesser members of Clan Campbell having their first Protestant experiences within the chief's touring household. Furthermore, these tours allowed the Earls of Argyll to enforce national standards within the region's parish churches. In July 1574, the 6<sup>th</sup> Earl of Argyll personally carried out a form of ecclesiastical visitation, ensuring each parish had a minister and that he received an adequate stipend.

The tours of the Campbells cannot be considered typical due to the vastness of the territory they covered and because of the great political strength of the Campbells of Argyll, especially the 5<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> earls. Due to the tours, the spread of Protestantism among the Clan Campbell was clearly widespread to such an extent that, when the 7<sup>th</sup> earl defected to Catholicism, the senior members of the clan elite severed their support of the earl in favor of his son, Lord Lorne, later 8<sup>th</sup> earl and 1<sup>st</sup> marquis. Although the defection of Archibald Campbell, 7<sup>th</sup> Earl of Argyll, came as a surprise the fact that the *fine* disassociated from the earl and provided Lorne with financial aid shows how successful the retinues were in instilling a devout adherence to Protestantism among the clan.

The power the Campbells of Argyll wielded throughout the Western Highlands and the impact that their household retinues had on the spread of the Protestant religion prompted the Bishop of Argyll to write to James VI requesting the Earl of Argyll's assistance. In the letter written by Andrew Boyd, Bishop of Argyll, to James on 24 February 1615 he stated:

HEREWITHE it wald please your sacred Majestie remember that the parties of your Majesteis kingdome committit to my spirituall ouersicht being so barbarous that without sever animadversione thay can nocht be cohibite from thair wonted savage behaviour: Nather can this be so convenientlie done as by the presence of the Erle of Argyll; whua at my last assemblie nocht onlie gave to me in secrete exceiding guid prove of his religione, basking the same with no worss knowledge; bot in publict offerit (undir your Majestie) to caus all obedience be given in discipline, churches to be builid and violent detenaris of ministeris glebis and mansis thairoff dispossessed...I humblie request your Majestie, in regairde heiroff ather to direct him [i.e. Argyll] to his awin cuntrie, or confine him within the samin.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> *Collectanea*, 120-1.



Although the Statutes of Iona were not addressed after 1609 the agreement reached in providing for the ministry was apparently still expected to be adhered to. Even though Argyll was not involved in the Statutes of Iona, it appears that Boyd still expected him to support the church in a manner similar to the one agreed to on Iona. Andrew Boyd's letter specifically states that inhabitants in Argyll were withholding the ministers' financial assistance and were disobedient in both building churches and in following the instructions of the clergy. The issues Boyd raised were all explicitly named as obligations of the chiefs in the first statute agreed in the Statutes of Iona. The fact that Argyll was the strongest supporter of the Protestant religion in the region, as well as the most influential noble, the bishop hoped to rely on Argyll for enforcement of the Statutes of Iona. Just as the Campbells of Argyll were looked to by the Church of Scotland as proponents of the Reformation they were likewise relied on as protectors of the faith in the region.

Due to the ardent support of the Campbells of Argyll for the Protestant faith and especially the political power of the Marquis of Argyll the National Covenant was apparently eagerly signed in Argyll. Subscription to the National Covenant in the early stages of the emerging "troubles" was met with some success among the chiefs and nobles beyond the Highland Line. After the covenant was signed in Argyll, subscription then spread through the Highlands; in Moray the document was signed by Alexander Brodie of Brodie, Alexander Brodie of Lethen, Sir James Grant of Freuchie, Sir Robert Innes of Innes, John Hay of Lochloy, Hugh Rose of Kilravock, John Grant of Glenmoriston, and Hugh Fraser, Lord Lovat. Also giving his approval was William Mackintosh of that Ilk, who claimed that he supported the Covenant but was unable to sign "being from home". Support for the Covenant was also found in Ross-shire through the subscription of the Earl of Seaforth, the Laird of Foulis, and the Laird of Balnagown "with many heads of minor houses". However, the signature gathering tour of the Covenant Movement was so widespread that the signatures of many were questionable. As the historian John Mackey states, "Many signed it for reasons of expediency, prominent among them being Lords Seaforth and Reay".<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>12</sup>J. Mackey, *The Church in the Highlands* (London, 1914), 119-120.



Due to the potential political ramifications of not signing the National Covenant subscription did not necessarily equate with adherence to the Covenant Movement nor the Protestant religion. Among those reported to have subscribed were Catholic MacDonalds who would make their aversion to Protestantism and the Earl of Argyll well known. Furthermore, the subscription by Protestants was not a guarantee that when the Western Highlands and Isles broke out in open warfare that those who signed would join the Covenant cause. The Earl of Seaforth, MacLean of Duart, and even Cameron of Lochiel who were men loyal to Protestantism or to the Earl of Argyll would join the ranks of the Royalists. As will be discussed in chapter seven, allegiance to the Covenanters and Royalists could not be clearly discerned based solely on subscription to the National Covenant and their religious affiliation.

## II

A large obstacle faced by those attempting to build a strong religious structure within the Western Highlands and Isles was the geographical isolation of many inhabitants in the region. The hostile terrain and remote location of many settlements and houses of worship hindered regular church services and impeded the attendance of both the clergy and the laity. The Reformed Kirk's attempts to solve the problems of accessibility and the ramifications it had on attendance ranged from hiring ferries to transport the ministers and parishioners to church to disciplining ministers found negligent in enforcing regular services. Although efforts were made to remedy the dire situation of the Kirk in the Western Highlands and Isles, it appears that the Isles remained more immune to the Reformed Kirk than some mainland areas by reason of their geographical situation.<sup>13</sup> According to a 1626 report written by Thomas Knox, Bishop of the Isles, in which he lamented the state of the Kirk in his diocese, he stated that he counted only ten ministers in the whole of the Hebridean parishes, but in actuality there were 19 ministers and two readers present.<sup>14</sup> The situation was so dire in the isles that the island of Cumbrae had one minister, Bute had three ministers, Arran had two ministers, Islay had two ministers,

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<sup>13</sup> F. Macdonald, "Ireland and Scotland: Historical Perspectives on the Gaelic Dimension 1560-1760" PhD thesis University of Glasgow (1994), 264.

<sup>14</sup> *Collectanea*, 122-125; Macdonald, "Ireland and Scotland", 258.



Mull had three ministers, Coll and Tiree had one minister each, Iona was serviced by Knox himself, Colonsay had only a reader, and Gigha, Cara and Jura were all served by the same minister based in Jura.<sup>15</sup> Knox continued his report by detailing the ministry in the North Isles, stating that the entire island of Skye had four ministers and one reader, Uist was “servit be ane verie auld man callit Donald MacMillen”, Harris had two ministers who also served the island of Barra, and the islands of Muck, Rhum, Canna, and Eigg were all served by the minister from Strathordale and Sleat on Skye.<sup>16</sup> The report submitted by Knox was intended to draw attention to the region and to prompt the church to increase its provision of competent ministers. Therefore, the discrepancy in the number of ministers reported by Knox to those actually present is a prime example of exaggeration in order to highlight the dire situation in the isles; yet, even 19 ministers and two readers were still not sufficient to cover such a vast area. The condition of the island parishes, along with some on the western seaboard, worsened with the outbreak of war in the mid-seventeenth century.

To complicate matters for the Kirk in its attempt to overcome the geographical obstacle, according to Professor James Kirk,

if the kirk could not in fairness be said to have neglected the Highlanders, it was still possible for Highlanders to neglect the kirk...too many parishioners had to remain content merely with a resident reader instead of having their own minister living within the parish. There was ample opportunity, therefore, even in more settled times, for parishioners in remoter communities—and even in not so remote communities—to avoid all contact with the kirk.<sup>17</sup>

Local parish attendance was vital to the Protestant ideal; all inhabitants were to attend church regularly to hear the Word of God and receive the sacraments. However, the parishes of the Western Highlands and Isles covered large mountainous areas, sometimes 20 miles across, and many of the churches were in inaccessible locations due to the transformation of old monastic houses, often located on islands off the coast or in the middle of a loch, into parish churches. Not

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<sup>15</sup> *Collectanea*, 124.

<sup>16</sup> *Collectanea*, 125.

<sup>17</sup> J. Kirk, “The Kirk and the Highlands at the Reformation”, *Northern Scotland*, vol. vii (1986), 19.



only did the geography and breadth of the parishes affect the laity, the clergy faced the same obstacles when trying to conduct church business.

Following the drafting of the National Covenant, a General Assembly was called to meet in Glasgow in 1638. Due to the strength of the Earls of Caithness and Sutherland, the northern province was fairly well represented. A total of 14 ministers and nine elders were sent from the presbyteries of Forres, Inverness, Dingwall, Tain, Dornoch, and Caithness.<sup>18</sup> Likewise, Argyllshire sent ministers from Inveraray, Kilmore, and Kilmun as well as Alexander Campbell of Kilmun and the Provost of Rothesay as elders.<sup>19</sup> In an attempt to strengthen the integrity of the Church of Scotland and to improve the staffing capabilities of the kirks within the Western Highlands and Isles, the Glasgow Assembly erected the Synod of Argyll with the support of Archibald Campbell, Marquis of Argyll. The “Order of Provincial Assemblies with Presbyteries Contained” issued on 17 December 1638 dictated the Synod of Argyll to include the presbyteries of Dunoon, Kinloch, Inveraray, Kilmore, and Skye in the bounds of the Sherifffdom of Argyll and Bute with part of Lochaber to meet at Inveraray on the fourth Tuesday of April. The order also prescribed the Synod of the Isles to encompass all kirks in the north-west Isles between Skye and Lewis and the rest of the isles formerly under the Diocese of the Isles, except for the south-west isles joined to the presbytery of Argyll, to meet at Skye on the second Tuesday of May.<sup>20</sup> Although the presbytery of Skye was ordered to attend the provincial meetings at Inveraray and ferries were arranged to transport the clergy to the meeting, the island remained refractory. As a result, after deliberation the “Act anent joining Skye to the Synod of Argyll” was issued, ordering the ministers and elders of Skye to keep their meeting and reiterated the fact that the presbytery of Skye was within the jurisdiction of Argyll “without any further question to be made there anent”.<sup>21</sup>

The purpose of both the Synod of Argyll and the Synod of the Isles was intended to facilitate the uniformity of doctrine in Scotland and to expedite communications between the Church and the Presbyteries, especially those in

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<sup>18</sup> Mackey, *The Church in the Highlands*, 121.

<sup>19</sup> The provost of Rothesay was most likely John Campbell because a 1643 commission in *APS*, VI, i, p.30, states, “John Campbell, sometime provost of Rothesay”.

<sup>20</sup> A. Peterkin (ed.), *Records of the Kirk of Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1838), 38.

<sup>21</sup> Peterkin (ed.), *Records of the Kirk of Scotland*, 323.



remote locations. Essentially, the Synods were to act as an intermediary between the Western Highlands and Isles and the rest of Scotland and, accordingly, made some of the more significant advancements in rectifying the church's shortcomings in the region primarily through its attempts to establish a clear religious organization and recruitment of Gaelic-speaking ministers.

In response to the mandatory presbytery meetings subsequently ordered by the General Assembly of 1638, the Synod of Argyll minutes for 24 April 1639 stated "In respect of the distance of our bounds and the difficulty of the way that we cannot have our presbeterial meetings as frequent and commodious as in other parts of this kingdom," and the synod ruled that it was sufficient to keep monthly meetings. The synod also ruled that, due to the ministers of the Isles having to take ferries across to the mainland to attend the meetings, they were licensed only to attend in June and August.<sup>22</sup> More specifically, the records of the Presbytery of Dunoon show that their weekly presbytery meetings had lapsed eight times between 1643 and 1649; the gaps ranged from five to thirteen months.<sup>23</sup>

Following on the minutes of the synod in which the island ministers were licensed to keep their meetings only in June and August, more specific licenses were issued on 7 October 1641. Out of consideration of the long journey and numerous ferries needed to transport the minister at Ardnamurchan, Mr. Duncan McCalman, to the presbytery meetings at Kilmore, the Synod of Argyll ordered that he only had to attend in June and August.<sup>24</sup> However, by October 1643 Mr. McCalman was still having trouble attending the two meetings due to a dispute with a local ferry operator. In response, the Synod of Argyll requested the Sheriff of Argyll to take order with John Roy McEan McDouill, ferrier, for refusing to transport Mr. McCalman from Lismore to Appin.<sup>25</sup> Due to the difficulty in navigating the islands, the Synod of Argyll was also forced to mandate the ferrying of the laity to enable them to attend regular church services. Specific instructions were sent by the synod to Hector MacLean of Kingairloch on 7 May 1640 to furnish a ferry at Kingairloch

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<sup>22</sup>D.C. MacTavish (ed.), *Minutes of the Synod of Argyll, 1639-51* (SHS, 1943), 5.

<sup>23</sup> NAS, Presbytery of Dunoon Records, CH2/111/2/6-31. The lapses were between 20 September 1643- 10 April 1644, 3 July 1644- 21 January 1645, 21 January 1645- 8 May 1645, 6 August 1645- 1 June 1646, 1 June 1646- 27 July 1647, 27 July 1647- 14 February 1648, 14 February 1648- 27 June 1648, and 2 September 1648- 31 January 1649.

<sup>24</sup> MacTavish (ed.), *Synod of Argyll*, 27.

<sup>25</sup> MacTavish (ed.), *Synod of Argyll*, 83.



whereby his tenants and people might repair regularly to the church at Kilmaluag on Lismore. Subsequent efforts were made for transportation to Lismore on 1 May 1650 when the synod sent a “recommendation” to the Marquis of Argyll to establish ferries at Lismore to better accommodate his people going to church.<sup>26</sup>

Although the use of ferries was intended to assist people in attending church, the vastness of the Highland parishes and the number of vacant parishes often proved an insurmountable problem. In order to improve the religious situation in the Highlands the Church of Scotland re-introduced a scheme for planting ministers in the region. Some critics called the scheme “devilish” because the redistribution of ministers and readers left one minister in charge of three to four parishes and one reader for each parish.<sup>27</sup> Furthermore, the scheme left numerous vacant parishes because of the size of the Highland parishes which left the kirks too far apart for pluralism to work; for example, in the Isles, a single minister served churches on clusters of neighboring islands and had to rotate his weekly services between the islands under his charge.<sup>28</sup>

In looking at the breakdown of the Dioceses of Caithness and Ross in 1614, the difficulty in providing a sufficient staff is seen in the decline in the number of clergy for such large areas. In 1607 Caithness had 20 ministers for 24 parishes with only four vacant parishes, but by 1614 those numbers had dropped to 13 ministers for 20 parishes with nine parishes vacant.<sup>29</sup> The number of ministers and parishes for the Diocese of Ross was just as unbalanced as Caithness by 1614. In an attempt to service the entire diocese, the parishes of Applecross, Gairloch, Lamlair,<sup>30</sup> and Dingwall were conjoined under one minister, creating a single parish that stretched from coast to coast. The amalgamation of these parishes was finally found to be too formidable a challenge for one minister and the plan was abandoned in 1614, leaving only Gairloch and Applecross joined under the charge of one minister. With

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<sup>26</sup> MacTavish (ed.), *Synod of Argyll*, 14 & 172.

<sup>27</sup> J. Kirk, “The Jacobean Church in the Highlands, 1567-1625”, in N. MacLean (ed.), *The Seventeenth Century in the Highlands* (Inverness Field Club, 1986), 32.

<sup>28</sup> M. Todd, *The Culture of Protestantism in Early Modern Scotland* (New Haven, 2002), 58.

<sup>29</sup> Kirk, “The Jacobean Church”, 33.

<sup>30</sup> Lamlair is also known as Lumlair; I.B. Cowan, *The Parishes of Medieval Scotland* (Scottish Records Society, 1967), 129.



the dissolution of the conjoined parishes, the Diocese of Ross reportedly had 25 ministers and one reader for its 35 churches.<sup>31</sup>

The situation in the Bishopric of Argyll was just as complicated as the rest of the Highlands. The one difference was the advantage of having the religious support and political influence of the Campbells of Argyll. As a result, the Bishopric was able to claim in 1574 that every parish in Lorne, central Argyll, and Cowal had the service of a minister and a reader; however, the Synod of Argyll was not able to make such an impressive claim when it conducted its own survey in 1649-50. A number of parishes within Argyll were amalgamated in the early seventeenth century and the ratio dropped to 32 ministers for 44 parishes. Like the Diocese of Ross, the amalgamation of parishes within the Bishopric of Argyll placed one man in charge of providing pastoral care to an area so large that even two or three ministers would have had trouble tending to his duties. By 1618 the parish of Kilcolmkill was joined with Kilblane, while Kilkerran, Kimichael and Kilchousland were combined,<sup>32</sup> and Glenorchy was conjoined to Inishail. However, a petition from the conjoined parishes to be separated was denied in 1621.<sup>33</sup>

Unfortunately for the Church of Scotland, the restructuring of religious authority did not rectify many of the problems found at the parish level, specifically the enormity and vacancy of many of the parishes in the Western Highlands and Isles which limited the amount of control the Kirk wielded during the Scottish Revolution. The number of vacant parishes in the region was magnified by the devastation created by Alasdair MacColla and his Irish regiments in 1644-5. After MacColla's departure, the Synod of Argyll attempted to assess the condition of its presbyteries. Information compiled by the Synod in 1649 and 1650 listed the vacant kirks in the presbyteries of Skye, Lorne, Argyll, and Kintyre. The presbytery of Skye had ten parishes vacant for between four and six years; the presbytery of Lorne had four kirks vacant for one to five years, as well as all the kirks in Mull; it also claimed that the kirks of Kilvoruy,<sup>34</sup> Kilmallie, and Kilmonivaig had remained

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<sup>31</sup> Kirk, "The Jacobean Church", 35.

<sup>32</sup> Kilchousland is also spelled as Kilchusland and is also known as Glenquhissillan; Cowan, *Parishes*, 97.

<sup>33</sup> Kirk, "The Jacobean Church", 37.

<sup>34</sup> Kilvoruy is also known as Kilmoroy in Arasaig, but is more commonly referred to as Arasaig; Cowan, *Parishes*, 7.



vacant since the Reformation. Further investigation by the synod also revealed that the presbytery of Argyll's kirk in Craignish had been vacant for two years, the kirk in Inveraray had been vacant for one year, and the island of Arran within the presbytery of Kintyre was without a minister in Kilmory for five years and Kilbride for a year.<sup>35</sup>

The number of vacant parishes should not have come as a surprise to the synod due to the long list of petitions from various kirks for a minister. Once the Synod of Argyll was established, urgent supplications were presented pleading for a minister and describing the lengths parishioners had to go to in order to get pastoral care. For example, Alan Cameron of Lochiel sent the Synod of Argyll a supplication for a minister on behalf of the parishioners of Kilmanevaig and Kilmalzie in Lochaber in October 1642. According to the supplication "many souls are ignorant of the word of God throw the want of preaching" and "we are forced to repair to other kirks land distant out of our bounds" for baptism and marriages. In an attempt to rectify the situation the assembly ordained Mr. Ewan Cameron, minister of Dunoon, and failing him Mr. Neil Cameron of Dysart to go to Lochaber March 1<sup>st</sup> "because the winter quarter is not fitt for travelers to those bounds".<sup>36</sup> The lack of clergy available resulted in ministers, such as Ewan Cameron, being shuffled around to various parishes to give occasional church services. A similar petition submitted from Kingarth in October 1643 resulted in the Presbytery of Dunoon ordaining service to be conducted at least once in twenty days because they could not provide a minister to conduct weekly service. The problem was still not resolved in May 1644 and the presbytery of Dunoon was forced to assign Mr. Patrick Stewart "to preach one Sabbath between this provincial and the next".<sup>37</sup>

Even with the employment of ferries and the re-structuring of the Highland parishes, the Reformed Kirk still faced a serious problem in enforcing regular church attendance. It became obvious to the Kirk that the problem of attendance was not easily solved by providing ferries or by appointing one minister to three churches; therefore specific members of the clergy and the laity were censured in an attempt to improve the state of religion. According to the minutes of the Synod of Argyll on

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<sup>35</sup> MacTavish (ed.), *Synod of Argyll*, 149-50.

<sup>36</sup> MacTavish (ed.), *Synod of Argyll*, 42.

<sup>37</sup> MacTavish (ed.), *Synod of Argyll*, 80; NAS, Presbytery of Dunoon Records, CH2/111/1/19.



26 May 1642, the main focus of business was on the negligence of the clergy in performing their duties and the absence of the laity from divine services. The minutes report that Mr. Donald Campbell, minister at Kilmartin, was found negligent in celebrating communion on 26 May 1642. As a result, Mr. Campbell was ordained to celebrate communion twice before January 1643.<sup>38</sup>

On the issue of negligent attendance of the laity, the Synod of Argyll stated that “considering the great hindering that the negligence of haveing publict divyne exercises works to the growth of knowledge and religion, especially in the yles and Morvern” the synod found it necessary that all kirk sessions were to put diligently into execution the act of the last assembly against absenters from divine service.<sup>39</sup> With the responsibility to enforce regular church attendance falling on the kirk sessions, the Kingarth kirk session, established in 1648, recorded various disciplinary actions taken against the laity. For example, on 24 April 1648 Gilchrist McKomas, David Liggat, Donald Campbell and William Andrew appeared before the session and were all found guilty of breaking the Sabbath. The council ordered McKomas to stand before the congregation for three Sundays since he was found to be the instigator of the offence and the other three were to stand for two Sundays.<sup>40</sup> Likewise, Mary McMurchie was “delated” for gathering “litt”, a plant that yields dye, on the Sabbath. The minutes of 24 April 1648 state that McMurchie confessed that as she was herding her cows on Sunday she “took up the litt in her hand and brought it home.” As a result the session found her guilty of breaching the Sabbath and ordered her to stand two Sabbaths in front of the congregation but because she was poor they forgave her unlawfulness and did not find it necessary to fine her.<sup>41</sup>

### III

The difficulty in providing an adequate clergy for the Western Highlands and Isles was another problem which the Church of Scotland was forced to address. The

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<sup>38</sup>MacTavish (ed.), *Synod of Argyll*, 29.

<sup>39</sup>MacTavish (ed.), *Synod of Argyll*, 31.

<sup>40</sup>NAS, Kingarth Kirk Session Minutes, CH2/219/1/9.

<sup>41</sup>NAS, Kingarth Kirk Session Minutes, CH2/219/1/9.



clergy appointed to the Highlands during the reign of James VI were not able to adequately bridge the gap between Protestant and Catholic and, thus, fully complete the process of the conversion of the inhabitants to Protestantism. The clergy in many Highland parishes were Lowlanders. These clergymen were often cosmopolitan figures, educated in Lowland or Continental universities, and were frequently employed in royal service. With these characteristics, the clergy attempted to facilitate and improve contact and communication between the Highlands and the Church.<sup>42</sup> However, these characteristics also severely hindered the progress of the Church. The fact that these men were cosmopolitan Lowlanders and educated in Lowland universities meant that few were willing to take positions in remote Highland parishes which habitually provided a severely limited income in comparison to other areas of Scotland and, even more importantly, few were Gaelic-speaking. Even the Irish Franciscan missionary, Fr. Cornelius Ward, pointed out that the Catholic mission to the Highlands could be successful due to the fact that the Anglo-Scots sent to minister to the locals were unsuitable because the difference between the Scots and the Celts was as different as “the Scots and the Greeks”.<sup>43</sup> The ineptitude of the clergy in the Highlands opened the door for the Irish Franciscans to attempt to reintroduce and, in some areas, foster the lingering adherence to Catholicism in areas neglected by the Protestant clergy.

The complications created by the shortage of Gaelic-speaking ministers were continually brought to the attention of the Kirk. During a visitation of Alvie and Laggan in Badenoch in 1626, the Synod of Moray found that the assigned minister should be forcibly retired due to incapacity. The synod found the minister to be “of verie gryt age, infirme in body and hes no thing of the Irishe language, quhilk be thair vulgar” and as a result, the synod sought two qualified recruits for Badenoch “quhilk lyeth destitute of the confort of the Word and sacramentis, for the most part, and altogidder without disciplin quhairby the gryest part lyethe in damnable atheisme”.<sup>44</sup> Similarly, the Synod of Moray found Patrick Dunbar “unfruitful” as the minister of Dorr “through want of the [Gaelic] language”.<sup>45</sup> It was becoming

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<sup>42</sup>Kirk, “The Jacobean Church”, 25.

<sup>43</sup> Giblin (ed.), *Irish Franciscan Mission*, 90.

<sup>44</sup> As quoted in Kirk, “The Jacobean Church”, 42.

<sup>45</sup> As quoted in Todd, *The Culture of Protestantism*, 58.



increasingly apparent that the mere presence of a minister was not sufficient to spread the Reformed faith. In order for Protestantism to build a strong foundation it was vital that the Word of God was clearly understood to save the inhabitants from “damnable atheisme”. The difficulty in finding a Gaelic-speaking ministry reached such a height that the assistance of the king was requested in 1643. According to a presentation to the king on 19 August 1643, it was reported that the Kirk was unable to find six qualified persons to fill the vacant kirks in the Highlands. The presentation requested that Charles would accept a list of three men from which Charles would hopefully “accept of any one qualified man, who shall be able to speak the Irish Language for kirks vaiking in the Highlands”.<sup>46</sup>

In 1643 the Kirk realized the importance of rectifying their clerical deficit and put a new emphasis on providing an adequate ministry in the Highlands. In order to improve the religious situation in the Gaelic-speaking Highlands, a new emphasis was put on the education system. On 16 August 1643 the General Assembly issued a “Recommendation to Presbyteries and Universities anent students having Irish”. It was believed that students who knew Gaelic should be trained in Letters, especially in the studies of Divinity. The Assembly’s recommendation stated that “Considering the lamentable condition of the people in the Highlands, where there are many that gets not the benefite of the Word...in respect there are very few Preachers that can speak the Irish language”. Therefore, the Assembly requested that Gaelic-speaking students were to be preferred for bursaries so they “may be sent forth preaching the Gospel in these Highland parts, as occasions shall require”.<sup>47</sup> In response to this recommendation, the Synod of Argyll took measures to ensure the flow of financial support to students throughout its presbyteries. On 7 October 1643 it ordered that the moderator of each presbytery was to use all diligence in collecting contributions for the students because of the “negligence of diverse of the brethren”. To ensure the students received their contributions they were ordered to repair to the moderator’s home on the 20<sup>th</sup> of November and to remain there until they received their sum.<sup>48</sup> Through the Assembly’s recommendation and the measures taken by the Synod of Argyll, the

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<sup>46</sup> Peterkin (ed.), *Records of the Kirk of Scotland*, 353.

<sup>47</sup> Peterkin (ed.), *Records of the Kirk of Scotland*, 351.

<sup>48</sup> Peterkin (ed.), *Records of the Kirk of Scotland*, 79.



target of a Gaelic-speaking ministry became the focal point of the Kirk's campaign to spread the Reformed faith through the Highlands.

Although 1643 proved to be a significant turning point in the Kirk's attitude towards the Gaelic language, the associated problems of providing an adequate ministry and bridging the linguistic division continued. An "Overture presented to the General Assembly" on 18 June 1646 suggested a list of measures that the Kirk should take "to the intent the knowledge of God in Christ may be spread through the Highlands and Islands (for in lack whereof the land hath smarted in the late troubles) these courses be taken". The first measure suggested reiterated the 1616 Regulations in that it recommended all gentlemen who were able were to send at least their eldest sons to be "bred" in the "Inland". Secondly, it was recommended that a ministry be placed among the Highlanders with ministers and expectants who could speak Gaelic, so that the kirks would be provided for like other kirks in the kingdom. Thirdly, the Overture requested that ministers and ruling elders who possessed a working knowledge of Gaelic be appointed to attend to neighboring parishes. The last measure suggested to the General Assembly was that "Scots Schools", meaning a structured education system where Scots could be taught, were to be erected in all parishes "where convenient". It appears that the General Assembly was continuing in their pursuit of spreading Scots, but in the interim was attempting to recruit Gaelic speaking ministers who were able to spread the "Word of God" until the inhabitants were literate in Scots. The General Assembly approved the measures in the Overture and recommended the issue to "further consideration" in the hopes "that more Overtures may be prepared thereanent".<sup>49</sup>

The issue of Gaelic and the ministry surfaced again in the Assembly of 1648. Apparently no new Overtures had been presented to the General Assembly and a statement was issued echoing the 1646 Overture.<sup>50</sup> In compliance with the General Assembly's statement of 1648 which reiterated that schools were to be erected in all parishes, the Synod of Argyll appointed the locations for the schools to be established in three of their presbyteries. On 9 May 1649 the synod specified the following appointment of schools: in Cowal at Kilfinan, Kilmodan, and

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<sup>49</sup> Peterkin (ed.), *Records of the Kirk of Scotland*, 449.

<sup>50</sup> For the text of the 1648 General Assembly's statement see Mackey, *The Church in the Highlands*, 126.



Lochgoilhead, in Argyll at Kilmichael in Glassery until they were able to move to Kilmartin, Castlesween, and some part of the country around Lochawe,<sup>51</sup> and in Lorne at Kilmore and Kilmaluag in Lismore and a third location which was left blank.<sup>52</sup>

At the same time as the Synod of Argyll was establishing schools and funding the education of students within their presbyteries it was still struggling to attract a satisfactory clergy and provide pastoral care to its parishioners. As a result, in May and October 1649 the Synod of Argyll continued in its attempt to spread the Reformed faith through their bounds by turning again to the liturgy. On 9 May 1649 the Synod of Argyll ordained the “Shorter Catechism” to be translated into Gaelic as well as passages from the Bible. The job of translating the catechism was given to the seven Gaelic-speaking ministers found within the Synod: Mr. Ewan Cameron, Mr. Colin McLachlan, Mr. Dugald Campbell, Martin McLachlan, Mr. Nicoll McCalman, Mr. John McLachlan and Mr. Dugald Darroch. The Synod of Argyll ordained the ministers to confer on the catechism and that it was to be collected at the next meeting. Furthermore, the synod had been advised that there were various translations of Biblical passages written by some of the clergy within the synod. In an attempt to bridge the linguistic shortcomings of the Reformed Kirk, the Synod of Argyll also ordained whoever had translations of any piece of the Bible to present their copies immediately to their presbyteries in the hopes that a Gaelic Bible could soon be drafted.<sup>53</sup> What is interesting about these orders is that in 1567 John Carswell, Bishop of the Isles, undertook the task of translating the *Book of Common Order* and the catechism into Gaelic. In his book, *Foirm na n-Urrnuidheadh*, Carswell used Calvin’s shorter catechism as a guideline but did make a few substitutions. For example, when asked what means were used in baptism one could not merely say the Word of God and water, but had to add that it ruled out “the other things which were used hitherto in the Papist church”.<sup>54</sup> The altered catechism highlighted the fact that the Highlands had an imperfect grasp of the Reformed faith, as well as an enduring adherence to Catholicism. These issues which Carswell

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<sup>51</sup> MacTavish (ed.), *Synod of Argyll*, 129.

<sup>52</sup> MacTavish (ed.), *Synod of Argyll*, 130.

<sup>53</sup> MacTavish (ed.), *Synod of Argyll*, 127.

<sup>54</sup> J. Dawson, “Clan, Kin and Kirk”, 231; McCaughey, “Protestantism and Scottish Highland Society”, 176.



already addressed in his translation were being tackled again nearly 90 years later by the Synod of Argyll. This raises the question of what happened to Carswell's contribution which was the first attempt to bridge the linguistic gap and to spread the Protestant religion throughout the Western Highlands and Isles. It appears as though the book was completely ignored by the Synod of Argyll, nowhere in their instructions does the synod order the ministers in charge of carrying out the translations to use Carswell as a guideline. There are two possible explanations for Carswell's work being overlooked; either there were few or no surviving copies 90 years later or the synod felt that Carswell's version, written in scholarly Gaelic, would not suffice and they needed a vernacular version. However, given the fact that *Foirm na n-Urrnuidheadh* does not appear to have undergone a second printing the more likely answer is that there were few or no copies to be had for reference. Unfortunately for the Church of Scotland, there would be no vernacular catechism until 1653, no vernacular psalm book until 1659, and a Gaelic Bible would not be sanctioned until 1754 and even then it was printed with the English text on the opposing page.

Although the synod was slowly making progress in improving the liturgy, they were still faced with a scarcity of qualified ministers. In October 1649 the Synod of Argyll was forced to send invitations to specific expectants and ministers known to speak Gaelic pleading with them to take up the ministry in the region. Three ministers and three expectants were sent letters requesting their service: Mr. John Dallas, Mr. Jeremy O'Queine, in particular for Inveraray, Mr. Archibald McClaine, and expectants Mr. Archibald Campbell, Mr. Alexander McClaine, and Mr. John Cameron.<sup>55</sup>

As is evident from the remedial actions taken by the Synod of Argyll, as late as 1649 the Western Highlands and Isles were still without a full, competent ministry large enough to service the entire area. Unfortunately, the measures put in motion to create a Gaelic-speaking ministry were inevitably long-sighted plans which were of little immediate benefit. Even with the new emphasis on Divinity among Gaelic-speaking students in universities, it would still take them years to

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<sup>55</sup> MacTavish (ed.), *Synod of Argyll*, 152-3.



finish their degrees, and the schools appointed by the Synod of Argyll had yet to be established.

#### IV

Under the leadership of Fr. Cornelius Ward, and later Fr. Patrick Hegarty, the Irish Franciscan Mission to the Western Highlands and Isles found nominal success in the Hebrides and the western seaboard of Scotland. Due to the strength of Protestantism in various pockets throughout the west of Scotland the main goal of the missionaries was to target the isles known to be inhabited by latent Catholics and then, using the Isles as a base, spread their mission throughout the west. An early report from the missionaries claimed that the inhabitants in the Hebrides possessed a great eagerness to receive the faith and that the “temptation and evils of the times” drew Scotland away from the faith, not through perversity or inconsistency of the people. The report continued by stating that the inhabitants were deprived of instruction, but had a faint recollection of the old faith.<sup>56</sup>

Whereas the Reformed Kirk had some success in employing the Highland chiefs to support their cause, primarily through the Campbell network, the Irish Franciscan missionaries were simultaneously gaining stronger support from some of the Catholic chiefs in the Western Highlands and Isles. Due to the fact that the majority of the Reformed ministry was Lowland based they were forced to rely primarily on the Clan Campbell retinues to spread Protestantism through the Western Highlands and Isles. The main drawback of this arrangement was that they focused their energy on one noble to enforce ecclesiastical organization and once that retinue departed so too did a portion of the Kirk’s authority. On the other hand, the Irish Franciscans specifically targeted a number of chiefs who were already known to support their beliefs and who could best assist the missionaries in maintaining and spreading the faith over a larger area.

Just as the Reformed Kirk was calling on the assistance of nobles, such as the Earl of Argyll, so too was the Catholic Church. Specific instructions from the

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<sup>56</sup> Giblin (ed.), *Irish Franciscan Mission*, 7.



Catholic nuncio in Brussels to the Irish Franciscan missionaries mirrored the Reformed Kirk's reliance on the nobility. The instructions began with orders to visit particular people of the islands, those more inclined than others to embrace the faith. It was explained that Hector MacNeil at Carskey in Kintyre was "very well disposed towards Catholics" and that Colla Ciotach, Laird of Colonsay, was Catholic and the missionaries were to take advice from him, especially on how to visit other islands.<sup>57</sup>

The Catholic chiefs in the Western Highlands and Isles not only aided the spread of Catholicism but also provided testimonials of the Irish Franciscans' success in an attempt to sustain the mission. A copy of a testimonial letter from Capt. Donald MacDonald, formerly in the service of the King of Spain, written at Colonsay 23 March 1629, stated that Fr. Cornelius Ward brought "a very great number" back to the faith in both the Hebrides and the Highlands. The letter continued that Fr. Ward, in the company of MacDonald, had visited Kintyre, Colonsay, the territory of Clanranald, and Glengarry where he administered the sacraments and further attested that Ward labored there for three years. According to MacDonald, those whom Fr. Ward converted preserved the faith even though they seldom saw priests and he admitted that some had strayed through fear of the local ministers.<sup>58</sup> A similar letter from Colla Ciotach, Laird of Colonsay, re-emphasized the importance of the nobility by supporting the statements made in the letter from MacDonald and more importantly by recounting the protection given to Ward by Colla. According to Colla's testimonial letter written at Colonsay 1 April 1629, Fr. Ward visited three times and he reported that Frs. Ward, Hegarty, and O'Neill had converted almost all the inhabitants. Colla Ciotach also explained that in 1629 ministers and "heretics" tracked down Fr. Ward with the intention of arresting him and that Fr. Ward had nobody to go to for protection. As a result, Colla risked his life and goods to rescue the missionary, and was severely injured in doing so.<sup>59</sup> The picture painted by these testimonial letters shows that, like their Protestant counterparts, the Catholic chiefs were essential to whatever success there was on the part of the Franciscan missionaries by assisting the Fathers in spreading the faith and by the protection afforded to them by the power of the clans.

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<sup>57</sup> Giblin (ed.), *Irish Franciscan Mission*, 24.

<sup>58</sup> Giblin (ed.), *Irish Franciscan Mission*, 122.

<sup>59</sup> Giblin (ed.), *Irish Franciscan Mission*, 125.



Similar to the Church of Scotland, the Irish Franciscans faced debilitating limitations which hindered the spread of the Catholic faith. Although well qualified and in close proximity, being just across the North Channel, to be able to minister to the inhabitants of the Western Highlands and Isles, the Irish Franciscans were only able to conduct a guerilla style attack on the Protestant religion. The recurrent issues which stalled the missionaries' progress are continually mentioned in their reports, primarily the threats to their physical well-being, the lack of resources, and the shortage of priests.

Nearly every report submitted by the Franciscan missionaries mentioned the threats to their persons by Protestant ministers and gentry in the region which made it difficult to travel the region in safety and forced them to flee to various and more remote islands throughout their missions. Often the missionaries made just a passing mention of the hostilities they faced; however, the frequency with which they were mentioned implies that it was an underlying problem in the progress of the mission. As these reports were forwarded to the Congregation as evidence of the missionaries' successes and failures, there is a propaganda element involved in determining the historical validity of these reports. However, the repetition of their points and the testimonial letters from prominent Catholic figures in the region indicate that there was real substance behind the complaints about the difficulties they faced in carrying out their mission.

In the reports from Frs. Patrick Hegarty and Cornelius Ward, both missionaries recounted the attempted attacks by the local ministers. In Patrick Hegarty's account of his travels in Kintyre during the winter of 1624, he reported that due to threats to his person he had to hide during the day in caves only to venture out to say Mass twice a night.<sup>60</sup> Hegarty also mentioned in his account that in Islay he was in danger of his life and was only able to stay for fourteen days, at which point 30 Catholics intervened and saved him from capture. Likewise, a report from Cornelius Ward covering the period July 1624 to the beginning of 1625 states that the minister in Kintyre attempted to attack himself and Paul O'Neill because they had converted one of the gentry in the area who happened to be a friend of the minister. Fortunately for the missionaries, intervention by Colla Ciotach thwarted

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<sup>60</sup> Giblin (ed.), *Irish Franciscan Mission*, 33.



the minister and the missionaries were able to flee to Cara.<sup>61</sup> Another attempt on Ward's life was made in Eigg in August 1625 by the local minister, Neil MacKinnon. According to the report from Ward, MacKinnon was angered by the number of inhabitants Ward had converted and traveled to Eigg with a military entourage intending to capture or kill the missionaries. Apparently, the newly converted gentry of the island threatened MacKinnon and, apparently out of fear of revenge, the laird negotiated with MacKinnon allowing him to keep one-third of the teinds as long as the minister did not molest Catholics.<sup>62</sup>

Although the Church of Scotland fell short of completing the spread of Protestantism, it was nevertheless effective in hindering the spread of Catholicism and in maintaining its dominance in Protestant pockets throughout the Western Highlands and Isles. Through the threats made to the missionaries' life and English assistance in the imprisonment of Ward and Hegarty the Church of Scotland was able to limit the movements of the Franciscan missionaries and reduce the number of inhabitants who had their Catholic faith strengthened by the missionaries' presence or who could possibly be converted.

Added to the problems inherent in the threats made to the missionaries, the scarcity of resources served to aggravate the situation. Similar to the brief mentions of the threats made by the missionaries, comments are consistently made throughout the reports which highlight the limited resources of the missionaries and indicate that, although the details can be exaggerated, the fact remained that the lack of supplies and maintenance was a key factor in the level of success or failure of these missions. During the 1620s and 1630s the reports repeatedly pointed to the scarcity of food and lack of bread and wine for communion as key components for the limits of the mission. Again, the reports from Ward and Hegarty provided evidence as to the scarcity of resources available to them. Ward stated that the region was lacking in resources and was so wild that it was impossible for the inhabitants to be hospitable. As a result, Ward and Paul O'Neill were forced to separate because the shortage of food made it difficult for them to work together; neither man had eaten

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<sup>61</sup> Giblin (ed.), *Irish Franciscan Mission*, 51.

<sup>62</sup> Giblin (ed.), *Irish Franciscan Mission*, 63.



on Colonsay and Mull.<sup>63</sup> The shortage of food was also a factor in the progress of Hegarty's work on Arran. According to Hegarty's report, he stayed for only eight days on Arran where he had to live in a cave subsisting on only butter, cheese and water, and he echoed Ward's summary of the inhabitants, claiming they were so poor they could not give anything to support the missionaries.<sup>64</sup> Although the lack of food to support the missionaries was of concern, the biggest problem as far as resources was the lack of wine and "the host" for religious services. In Hegarty's explanation for temporarily leaving the mission, he stated that the things necessary to promote the faith were not obtainable in the Highlands and Isles. The explanation summarizes the numerous mentions made by both Hegarty and Ward in the 1620s. Both missionaries blamed the limitations of their services on not having the resources to perform the sacraments; Hegarty had to send his assistant to the Lowlands to acquire wine and Ward was unable to give communion or consecrate a church and cemetery.<sup>65</sup>

Numerous requests for resources, subsidies and greater manpower were sent to the Congregation throughout the mission; however, all concessions were temporarily withheld due to delays in verifying the content of the reports and testimonials submitted. It was relayed to the missionaries that Scots present at the Congregation questioned the validity of the reports and, in order for the concessions to be granted the reports, especially the summary of Hegarty's 1630-1 report, were forwarded to the Nuncios in Flanders and France for verification. Due to the delayed response by the Congregation the mission began to collapse. As early as 1625 Ward was finding it difficult to convert the gentry in South Uist because they had not had a priest visit them in 100 years and they had nobody to continue instructing them once the missionaries left.<sup>66</sup> The lack of priests as well as missionaries became a major issue in the continuance of the mission. A later report from Ward in 1637 stated that the missionaries were worn out by the excess work and lack of aid; the only ones still working were Hugh Ward and Patrick Hegarty.<sup>67</sup> For the majority of the mission there were on average only four missionaries

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<sup>63</sup> Giblin (ed.), *Irish Franciscan Mission*, 55 & 53.

<sup>64</sup> Giblin (ed.), *Irish Franciscan Mission*, 33.

<sup>65</sup> Giblin (ed.), *Irish Franciscan Mission*, 33, 64, 71.

<sup>66</sup> Giblin (ed.), *Irish Franciscan Mission*, 69.

<sup>67</sup> Giblin (ed.), *Irish Franciscan Mission*, 175.



working in the Western Highlands and Isles, and requests for greater manpower were delayed by the Congregation while they verified the reports. The problem of subsidies and manpower reached such a level that Hegarty wrote to the Congregation from Waterford on 29 August 1646, airing his frustrations at the lack of strong support for the mission. Hegarty claimed that “there is now a greater chance than ever of winning over the Scots to the true faith” and that if the Congregation wanted the mission to continue they had to double the allowances and send two more missionaries from Louvain. Although Daniel MacNeill and Daniel Laertius had finally arrived in Scotland, Hegarty requested that the Congregation also send John Gormley and Anthony Gearnon because they needed the extra manpower to take advantage of the current situation. Hegarty finished his letter by stating that if the Congregation could not grant the above concessions he requested to “be relieved of his post as prefect of the mission”.<sup>68</sup>

The combination of threats of physical harm, lack of resources, and limited manpower greatly reduced the effectiveness of the Irish Franciscan mission. Yet, Catholicism persisted in the Western Highlands and Isles even though the spread of the faith was sporadic and was not adequately maintained. As indicated by Patrick Hegarty, a number of islanders were traveling to Bonamargy in Ireland for Catholic religious services.<sup>69</sup> As a result, the threat of a Catholic invasion or uprising remained even though, in reality, the menace posed by the Irish Franciscans themselves was severely hampered.

## V

The difficulty for the Kirk in regard to Catholics was not limited to the incursion made by the Irish Franciscans in the Western Highlands and Isles; outward conformity of some Catholics to the Reformed faith in order to avoid prosecution for their beliefs proved almost as great an obstacle. An anonymous letter written around 1651 stated that “The natives of the islands adjacent to Scotland can, as a rule, be properly called neither Catholic nor heretics. They abhor heresy by nature, but they

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<sup>68</sup> Giblin (ed.), *Irish Franciscan Mission*, 187.

<sup>69</sup> Giblin (ed.), *Irish Franciscan Mission*, 180.



listen to the preachers from necessity. They go wrong in matters of faith through ignorance, caused by the want of priests to instruct them in their religion.”<sup>70</sup> As late as the mid-seventeenth century it was difficult to classify the locals into one religious group; however, the letter indicates that the Islanders’ neglect of Catholicism was the result of a shortage of priests and not because they followed the Protestant beliefs. This duality among the population of Catholics throughout Scotland, and especially in the Western Highlands and Isles, is more clearly revealed in letters from the Captain of Clanranald and from a Jesuit priest.

A letter sent by Iain Muideartach, 12th Chief of Clanranald, to Pope Urban VIII in 1626 stated:

We humbly beg of Your Holiness that in the absence of any other means of redeeming our lives or goods, it may be permitted to us and to the other Catholic nobles by favour of the Holy Apostolic See to be present at the preaching of the heretics, but only when we shall be summoned before the supreme Council of the Kingdom or before the pseudo-bishops, on this condition, however, that we shall then publicly protest that we are Catholics according to the faith and religion of the Roman Church, asserting, at the same time, that we go to their churches not willingly nor from conviction but from compulsion and obliged by an unjust law of the kingdom, in order not to lose life and goods, not willingly nor from motives of religion.<sup>71</sup>

The compromise suggested by Clanranald was increasingly becoming a common practice amongst the Catholic community, not just in the Highlands and not just within the nobility. A letter sent by John Leslie, a Scots Jesuit, on 13 June 1633 from Glasgow to Father Mutius Vitelleschi, Superior General of the Society of Jesus, illustrated the same mentality as that shown in the letter from Clanranald. Fr. Leslie reported that he had to admonish a common woman for attending a “heretic worship” and that her reply was that other Catholic orders were more understanding of the predicament many Catholics were faced with. The confessor continued by explaining that “It is in opposition to our own wishes that we pretend to be heretics, profess to belong to the Calvinist sect, and go to listen to the sermons of the sectaries in obedience to the orders issued by ecclesiastical, parliamentary and royal

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<sup>70</sup> Quoted in O. Blundell, *The Catholic Highlands of Scotland: The Western Highlands and Isles* (Edinburgh, 1917), 6.

<sup>71</sup> J.L. Campbell, “The Letter Sent by Iain Muideartach, Twelfth Chief of Clanranald, to Pope Urban VIII, in 1626”, *Innes Review* IV, no. 2, (1953) pages 110-6, at p. 116.



authority. We hold the Catholic faith in our hearts, while with our lips we join in the ritual of the new gospel, under penalty of losing all we have in the world if we acted differently”.<sup>72</sup>

Although Penal Laws were in place to declare forfeit the goods belonging to Catholics, surprisingly many were given the opportunity to conform and maintain their possessions. It is quite possible that the leniency shown to some Catholics, including former ministers who had joined the priesthood, was an attempt to win their hearts and minds through a show of compassion. As seen in the Synod of Argyll’s proceedings against Catholics, both Lady Lergy and Mr. William Campbell of Eorobolls were given the opportunity to confer with the local minister and to conform to the Reformed religion.<sup>73</sup> According to the minutes of 7 October 1642, Lady Lergy was to repair to Dunoon to confer with Mr. Ewan Cameron and Campbell of Eorobolls was to repair to Inveraray to confer with Mr. Donald McOlvery.<sup>74</sup> The two ministers reported on 25 May 1643 that Lady Lergy on all occasions did resort to the exercises of public worship and that Campbell of Earobolls gave satisfaction to Mr. McOlvery on many points but claimed that, since he had been a papist for so long, it would take some time to “have him liberat of all scruples.”<sup>75</sup> Numerous speculations can be made as to why after the minute entries for 25 May 1643 there was no further mention of these two papists. One possibility is that the ministers were actually successful in converting Lady Lergy and Mr. William Campbell of Eorobolls to Protestantism; the other is that both papists were able to use outward conformity to shake loose the suspicions of their religious inclination. Whatever the cause may be, the fact that the Kirk allowed them the chance to conform rather than seizing their property indicated the Kirk’s need, as late as 1642, to gain support during the early stages of the Covenant Movement. However, this leniency disappeared after the arrival of Alasdair MacColla and his Irish regiments.

The assumption of the time was that the Irish Catholics were planning an invasion of the west coast of Scotland with the intention of joining forces with the

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<sup>72</sup> Leith, *Memoirs of Scottish Catholics*, 146-7.

<sup>73</sup> The exact identity of Lady Lergy and Mr. William Campbell of Eorobolls could not be found other than the titles given in the minutes.

<sup>74</sup> MacTavish (ed.), *Synod of Argyll*, 60.

<sup>75</sup> MacTavish (ed.), *Synod of Argyll*, 67.



remnant Catholic forces in Scotland. As indicated by the remonstrance of the General Assembly of 1646 concerning the province of Argyll, the Assembly claimed to the Committee of Estates that the enemy in Argyll was supported by a number of priests and friars who were intent on seducing the people in Kintyre and the Isles to popery and the Assembly believed that the Roman Catholics were attempting to topple the Protestant churches in both Europe and Britain.<sup>76</sup> Due to the perceived connection between the Irish Catholic regiments brought over by MacColla and the Roman Catholic attempt to topple Protestantism, the Kirk took a strong approach when dealing with those found to be involved with the “rebels” through excommunication regardless of their being Catholic or Protestant. A series of excommunications were issued when the royalist campaign of MacColla and Montrose came to an end in 1646. In July and August 1646 the General Assembly declared all “pryme actours of this bloodie and wnnaturall rebellion” excommunicated which included, among others, Alasdair MacColla, James Ogilvie, Earl of Airlie, and George MacKenzie, Earl of Seaforth.<sup>77</sup> Further steps were taken against the rebels by the Synod of Argyll in September 1648 when a list of 42 men was to be pronounced excommunicated by Mr. Dugald Campbell in Inveraray on the 27<sup>th</sup> of September. Because of the persistent threat of Catholicism combined with the devastation by the rebels throughout Argyll the list of men was expanded to include those who were a specific threat to the stability of the Kirk in the region such as Angus MacDonald of Glengarry and John MacRanald, Captain of Clanranald.<sup>78</sup>

The fears of a Catholic invasion from Ireland and the resulting excommunications in the late 1640s served as a barometer of the Church of Scotland’s success in establishing a strong Protestant following in the Western Highlands and Isles. Although steps were taken to remedy the deficiencies within the Kirk, many of the measures put in place fell short of solving the problems during the first half of the seventeenth century. As a result, the Western Highlands and Isles continued to resist a full programme of conversion to Protestantism because the

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<sup>76</sup>Mitchell, A.F. & Christie, J. (eds.), *Records of the Commissions of the General Assemblies 1646 and 1647* (SHS, 1892), 70-1.

<sup>77</sup> Mitchell & Christie (eds.), *Commissions of the General Assemblies 1646 and 1647*, 19 & 55.

<sup>78</sup> MacTavish (ed.), *Synod of Argyll*, 100-1.



Church often was not able, as it did in southern Argyll, to exploit potential links with the kin-based, Gaelic-speaking culture; nor was it able, in more hostile territory such as that of Clanranald, to circumvent the habits and natural loyalties within the local Gaidhealtachd. Because of these fissures, or weaknesses, within the foundation of the Church of Scotland in the Western Highlands and Isles, the Kirk was forced to admit as late as the early eighteenth century that the Reformation had not yet entered Clanranald's bounds.<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> Macdonald, "Ireland and Scotland", 280.



## Chapter 6

### Indebtedness in the Western Highlands and Isles

As will be discussed in the following chapter, the economic position of the clans in the Western Highlands and Isles at the outbreak of the Civil Wars had a strong influence in the development of allegiances in the region. The economic ramifications of warfare were many; for example, the economic status of the clan dictated the size of the chief's mustering capabilities. Likewise, the financial losses through territorial devastation and the gains through pillage directed the clans to align with a particular faction. Therefore, it is important to understand the economic climate in the region to understand how these forces played a role in the war. This chapter will focus primarily on the level of indebtedness of the clans before and during the conflict paying particular attention to the causes and means of accruing debt while using the financial dealings of the Captain of Clanranald, Lamont of Lamont, and Campbell of Glenorchy as case studies to illustrate how different clans dealt with their financial circumstances.

The level of indebtedness among the chiefs of the Western Highlands and Isles resulted from the development of a close connection with central government. The chiefs found it increasingly difficult to adjust from their former warlord role to one of a proprietor. This dilemma was partly the product of the annual appearances of the chiefs before the Privy Council in Edinburgh. The annual appearances necessitated periods of absence from the chiefs' estates resulting in the dilapidation of their property and created administrative problems. An analysis of the surviving testaments among the Highland chiefs shows a dramatic increase in the amount of debt left by the deceased. An examination of 31 testaments conducted by Dr. Douglas Watt revealed that the average debt between 1570 and 1589 equaled £819, roughly 18 percent of the chief's movable assets, while the debt accumulated between 1590 and 1609 was £2,765, roughly 39 percent of assets.<sup>1</sup> These figures would steadily increase as a result of the mandatory annual meetings and the

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<sup>1</sup> D. Watt, "Chiefs, Lawyers and Debt: a study of the relationship between Highland elite and legal profession in Scotland 1550 to 1700", PhD thesis, University of Edinburgh (1998), Appendix IX, 300-1 & 223.



increase in the chiefs' expenditure while residing in Edinburgh. For many chiefs, conspicuous expenditure in the form of luxury purchases and socializing transformed the clans' financial situation from "acute financial embarrassment into chronic insolvency" by the 1640s.<sup>2</sup> Another contributing factor to the indebtedness of the chiefs was the economic impact of the civil war of the 1640s. The chiefs found themselves faced with the costs of fighting campaigns, heavy fines for the insurgents, and severe losses in rents. When the financial implications of the annual appearances were combined with the economic impact of the civil war the result was near destruction of many of the clans from the Western Highlands and Isles.

Financial troubles for the clans began in the late sixteenth century with the beginning of the transformation of the chiefs from warlords into proprietors, a process which would gain further momentum throughout the seventeenth century. This transformation was brought about by government pressures to abandon the clan system's traditional subsistence based economy which allowed the clans to function independently from the rest of the kingdom, and a new emphasis was to be placed on a cash based market economy that would foster a connection between the clans and market towns. The problem which arose for the chiefs was in the conversion of rents and payments previously made in kind to the newly required cash payments. The difficulty in transitioning to a cash based economy was common throughout Scotland; therefore, the impact it had on the Gaidhealtachd was similar to the new demands being placed on the estates of landholders and tenants across Scotland.

As with Lowland landholders, in order to convert farm goods into ready cash, clan chiefs were faced with two options: take responsibility for taking goods to market to be sold for cash, or to place the responsibility on the tenants and require them to convert the goods into cash for rent payments. According to Robert Dodgshon, it appears that chiefs adopted both processes.<sup>3</sup> Both practices made the chiefs' income relatively flexible and increasingly dependent on market values. The decision to take rents in kind or to demand cash rents varied. For example, if the set

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<sup>2</sup> A. Macinnes, "The Impact of the Civil Wars and Interregnum: Political Disruption and Social Change within Scottish Gaeldom", in R. Mitchison & P. Roebuck, (eds.), *Economy and Society in Scotland and Ireland 1500-1639* (Edinburgh, 1988), 62.

<sup>3</sup> R. Dodgshon, *From Chiefs to Landlords: Social and Economic Change in the Western Highlands and Isles, c. 1493-1820* (Edinburgh, 1998), 108. For an extensive discussion of the conversion of rents in kind to cash rents see Dodgshon's chapter on "The Transformation of Chiefs into Landlords", 102-22.



value of grain was less than the market value the chiefs often opted for rents in kind enabling them to make a profit at market, but if the market value was less the chiefs chose cash payments and passed the financial burden on to the tenants. Consequently, the chiefs' income was based on tenant farming which meant that the chiefs' cash flow was heavily dependent on the viability of the harvest and the subsequent market values of agricultural goods. As a result, the chiefs' income was often a combination of rents in kind and in cash; the trouble with this was that the chiefs were increasingly burdened with cash liabilities arising from the annual meetings and financial transactions in the Lowlands that could not be paid in kind. Depending on the year's harvest the chiefs' accounts may or may not have had enough ready cash to fulfill their obligations and forced many chiefs into debt.

Although the process of integrating the Highland chiefs into national politics failed due to the collapse of the annual meetings, aspects of integration of the chiefs still remained. The fact that the chiefs were spending more time in Edinburgh and interacting on a greater level with Lowlanders meant that they were becoming increasingly exposed to and involved in the social and economic activities of Lowland society. As seen in the problem of indebtedness among the chiefs of the Western Highlands and Isles conspicuous consumption and financial dealings with the Lowland debt market kept the chiefs partially involved in the Lowlands, even after their attendance at the meetings was no longer enforced. Merchant and legal bills accrued by the chiefs indicate that they had been exposed to the fashion trends of the Lowlands as well as the social activities of the Lowlands, primarily gambling, and the benefits of using the legal system to settle disputes. Although the chiefs were no longer politically integrated through state formation policies, they were still linked with the center economically.

In looking at the payments of royal rents from the Western Highlands and Isles it appears that the instituting of the annual meetings had an effect on the regularity with which payments were made. The number of royal lands in the region was relatively small, but the lands were much larger in comparison to Lowland territories resulting in rather significant sums due. The revenue from the Western Highlands and Isles appears to be a reason for direct crown interest; for example, the crown's rental income on Islay alone was £6,000 which explains the crown's interest



in the Islay rebellion as stability in the region would ensure timely payments being made to the crown.<sup>4</sup> Between 1600 and 1616 only 3 payments were made by the Clan Donald for their possession of Islay, one of which was a partial payment, while the average annual income from the region was £2,874. However, after the Islay rebellion when Campbell of Cawdor was granted possession of the island the rental payments of £6,000 were paid more consistently which raised the average rental payment between 1616 and 1635 to £7907. A survey of rental payments made between 1600 and 1635 shows a consistent pattern in payments made from Argyll and portions of Inverness-shire, with the exception of Islay which was embroiled in feuds and rebellion between the 1580s and 1616.<sup>5</sup> In some cases payments were made in arrears, such as Clanranald's payment in 1617 for £2,408 for three years' payment.<sup>6</sup> Prior to 1617 Clanranald, MacDonald of Sleat, and MacLean of Duart made irregular rental payments either by not making a payment or by making only a partial payment while the Clan Campbell rental payments were more regular. This pattern with which payments were made prior to the annual meetings appears to continue through the duration of the annual meetings. After 1629 when the frequency of the annual meetings began to decline the crown continued to receive regular payments from the Campbells for their lands in Islay, Kintyre, Jura, Colonsay, Ardnamurchan, and Sunart which constituted the bulk of the region's revenue and the yearly payments averaged £8,621; however, Clanranald, MacDonald of Sleat, and MacLean of Duart are not registered as making their payments.

In the cases of Clanranald and MacLean of Duart the probable explanation for their neglect in paying their royal rents throughout the late 1620s and early 1630s was the level of debt both chiefs were faced with during this period; as will be discussed in this chapter both chiefs were faced with financial insolvency. The fact that the revenue collected from the Western Highlands and Isles remained relatively stable prior to the annual meetings indicates that the financial difficulties of the

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<sup>4</sup> NAS, Exchequer Records, E24/22-52, 1600-1635; Appendix 6: Royal Rent Payments from Argyll and Portions of Inverness-shire, 1600-1635; see also W. Purves, *Revenue of the Scottish Crown, 1681*, ed. D. Murray Rose (Edinburgh, 1897), 74 for later survey of crown property in Argyll which can be compared in the same volume to other shires.

<sup>5</sup> See Chapter 2, "The Western Highlands and Isles in Context" p.25-27 for discussion of the Islay rebellion.

<sup>6</sup> NAS, Exchequer Records, E24/36, 1617-8.



chiefs were not a result of existing financial responsibilities, such as royal rents, but were the result of the new financial obligations created by their integration into Lowland society and national politics.

As discussed in previous chapters, the 1616 Regulations imposed various rules on the clan system with the largest financial effect radiating from the annual appearances. Along with the requirement to attend the meeting with the Privy Council came further orders which increased the severe financial burdens faced by many of the chiefs in the Western Highlands and Isles. The first of these new measures is easy enough to explain; the chiefs were to retain a lawyer in Edinburgh who would serve as a conduit between the Privy Council and the chiefs for summons and other official business. The employment of such agents would not allow for the chiefs' usual excuses of "I didn't know" when they ignored a summons. In a report to James VI by the Privy Council the intention was "so the saidis Yllismen pretend no ignorance of the same".<sup>7</sup> Of course these lawyers did not work for free. The legal expenses accumulated by the chiefs fell into two categories: pensions and costs of the legal process. The pensions paid to lawyers were a set sum which served as a retainer, meaning that the lawyer was on the chief's payroll and was to be at the chief's beck and call. The costs of the legal process were composed of the court fees for filing documents, such as a sasine, and the additional charges by the lawyer for having to appear in court. The retention of lawyers served as a direct financial burden on the chiefs; John MacLeod of Dunvegan paid a pension of 50 merks a year to John Nicoll between 1629 and 1633.<sup>8</sup> Furthermore, with the increase in financial and legal transactions resulting from a great deal of time being spent in the Lowlands for the annual visits, MacLeod's financial difficulties grew to such an extent that for the years 1636-7 he owed his attorney, John MacLae, £3,632 for both his pension and for court costs.<sup>9</sup> Although the increase in legal transactions indicates one positive effect of the annual meetings through the increased use of the

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<sup>7</sup>J. Munro, "When Island Chiefs came to Town" in *Notes & Queries: The Society of West Highland and Island Historical Research* XIX (Dec. 1982), 11-9, at p. 12.

<sup>8</sup> Dunvegan Papers, Accts. Box 1, 4/29, 5/54 as quoted in Munro, "When Island Chiefs came to Town", 18.

<sup>9</sup> F. J. Shaw. *The Northern and Western Islands of Scotland: Their Economy and Society in the Seventeenth Century* (Edinburgh, 1980), 45.



courts to settle disputes rather than the sword, the mounting legal fees had a much greater negative effect because they pushed many, like MacLeod, into serious debt.

The use of cautions and sureties imposed by the annual appearances went hand in hand, and like the retention of lawyers, had a twofold impact on the chiefs. The caution was a sum of money put up by one chief guaranteeing another's appearance for the following year, and the surety was a second sum that secured a chief's promise to keep the peace in his bounds. Clearly, both practices had significant impacts on the chiefs' finances; the sums for sureties alone ranged from 5,000 merks to £10,000 Scots.<sup>10</sup> The forfeiture of cautions became a common occurrence after 1629; for example, MacLean of Duart, MacLean of Morvern, and MacLaine of Lochbuie were decerned against for their failure to appear in 1629 and again in 1631, with the addition of Clanranald.<sup>11</sup> These measures made it more difficult for a chief to avoid answering for the behavior of himself and his clan. Not only was this because he faced being put to the horn and fined, but he also had to face the other chief who was now out of a large sum of money because he had guaranteed an appearance or peace-keeping. The combination of the agents, cautions and sureties which came out of the annual meetings slowly brought an end to the turmoil in the Isles as seen during James VI's reign. This transformation came by holding chiefs accountable for their own behavior and by making them provide caution and surety for their neighbor, both points having their own monetary repercussions.

The chiefs also faced indirect financial burdens which resulted from the logistics behind attending the annual meetings as well as the need to live a more sophisticated Lowland lifestyle. The logistical complexities in traveling from the Highlands to Edinburgh and Glasgow resulted in the accumulation of enormous costs. The "Accounts by Gregor Grant of his expenditure on behalf of Sir John Grant of Mulben, younger of Freuchie, in two journeys to Edinburgh in 1620" provide a clear and detailed glimpse into the costs of traveling and residing in Edinburgh along with the financial dealings with lawyers in the city. In February 1620 Sir John's journey took nine days and he was accompanied by six gentlemen

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<sup>10</sup>A. Macinnes, *Clanship, Commerce and the House of Stuart 1603-1788* (East Linton, 1996), 72.

<sup>11</sup> *RPC*, 2<sup>nd</sup> series, ii, 218; *RPC*, 2<sup>nd</sup> series, iv, 280.



with their horses and nine servants. The second journey in June 1620 again included six horsemen and their servants. The combined expenses paid out by Gregor Grant for the two journeys which included travel expenses, accommodation, and legal fees totaled £1,358 6s 5d.<sup>12</sup> The expenses of Sir John's journey provide a rough estimate of what the typical costs amounted to for somebody of his status and geographical location; however, it can be assumed that the costs of the journey for the island chiefs would be slightly higher and that the more powerful chiefs would have a larger retinue to support and would partake in entertaining while in the Lowlands. Therefore, Sir John's expenses can be applied to the expenses of the chiefs of the Western Highlands and Isles as the minimum expenditure that a chief's journey to Edinburgh would amount to.

To compound the issue, the socializing and shopping sprees of the Highland chiefs while in the Lowlands only served to further deplete their finances. The poems of Eachann Bacach, MacLean bard, provide evidence of Sir Lachlan MacLean of Duart's dealings while in Edinburgh during the 1630s. Bacach's poem "Iorram do Shir Lachann", written about 1635, lamented his chief's frivolous expenditures:

Mhic Moire na greine  
A ghiulain do cheusadh,  
'S tu m'aighear is m'eudail 's mo threoir.  
[Son of Mary, Lord of the sun, who hast suffered crucifixion, Thou art my joy, my treasure and my strength.]

Greas thugainn dhachaidh  
Oighre dligheach na h-aitribh  
Nam piob is nam brataichean sroil.  
[Send home speedily to us the lawful heir of the house, the man of the pipes and the satin banners.]

An Dun Eideann nan caisteal  
Tha ceannand treun na mor aitim:  
'S ann ded' bheus a bhith sqapadh an oir;  
[The mighty leader of the great sept is in Edinburgh of the castles: it is a custom of yours to disperse gold,]

Is nach b'urrainn dod' dhutchaich  
Chur ad ghlacaibh de chuinne

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<sup>12</sup>D. Watt, "Chiefs, Lawyers and Debt", 200; W. Fraser, *The Chiefs of Grant* 3 vols. (Edinburgh, 1883), iii, 22.



Na chosgadh tu chruintibh mu' bhord.

[While your own land could never put as much money in your hands as the crowns you would spend round the gambling table.]

Gur buidheach na h-esgean

De dh'uasal an eididhi

Leat gun guidh buaidh threun anns gach toir.

[The poets are grateful to the nobleman of the fine apparel; they will pray for a mighty victory for you in every pursuit.]<sup>13</sup>

The actions of Sir Lachlan while in Edinburgh were not unique; many chiefs became involved in Lowland society and began to emulate the lifestyle and fashion of Edinburgh often replacing their Highland attire with the Lowland fashion which was perceived to be more civilized.<sup>14</sup>

After only about five or six years the costs of the annual meetings both direct and indirect began to mount and were putting many chiefs in financial predicaments. The warlords of James VI's reign were, by Charles I's accession, asking the government to be excused from the meetings and for immunity from their creditors before they would journey south to appear before the Privy Council.<sup>15</sup> The first such petition on the grounds of economic detriment came from Sir Rory Mor MacLeod of Dunvegan in 1622. In a letter to James VI, Sir Rory claimed that his yearly appearance in Edinburgh was "to my great hurt". MacLeod continued his letter by stating that "in regaird of the far distans of place fra the Counsell it haldis me yeirle mekill of half ane yeir in the Laichland...I am of intention to repair my houssis and theik them with lead and to plant and decoir the countrie and boundis thairin." In an attempt to "decoir my houssis and plant yardis and orchardis and diffra my debtis and pay my Creditouris" MacLeod asked James VI for a seven year leave from the meetings; the king agreeing granted him three years to conduct the necessary business.<sup>16</sup> The ability of chiefs, such as MacLeod of Dunvegan, to draw a correlation between their financial status and their ability to administer their estates in accordance with the regulations outlined by the Privy Council led to an increase in the frequency of dispensations from the Privy Council. Once an excuse was

<sup>13</sup> C. O'Baoill, (ed.), *Eachann Bacach and other MacLean Poets* (Edinburgh, 1979), 6-7.

<sup>14</sup> *The Book of Dunvegan* contains numerous merchant bills of the MacLeods of Dunvegan which include the purchase of silk, lace, and silver buttons, as well as an oven.

<sup>15</sup> A. Macinnes, *Clanship, Commerce and the House of Stuart*, 72-3.

<sup>16</sup> NLS, MS 2133, pp.113-4.



granted on the basis of financial hardship numerous chiefs began requesting excuses on the same grounds.

The pleas for an excuse from the meetings were not only filed by specific chiefs but also by the chiefs as a whole in an attempt to show a united front. Similar to the previous request from MacLeod, a supplication filed on 11 July 1633 complained of the financial burden the annual meetings had on the region in general and on the chiefs' resources and, more importantly, their status. The supplication was submitted by MacDonald of Sleat, MacLeod of Dunvegan, MacLean of Duart and the Captain of Clanranald on behalf of themselves and other landholders of the islands on the grounds that the annual appearance was a major burden "it being a moithe and canker which eatis up our wholl estates and in tyme will overthrow us". The Privy Council agreed with the supplication's statement that the islands had been peaceful and excused the chiefs from the 1634 meeting.<sup>17</sup> It would be only ten years before the chiefs' predictions came true; by the early 1640s both MacLean of Duart and the Captain of Clanranald were faced with financial ruin stemming in part from the financial ramifications of the annual meetings. Although excuses were granted by the Privy Council prior to 1632, the dire economic situation in the Western Highlands and Isles became a compelling reason for a dispensation.

Roughly the same time as the chiefs were petitioning the Privy Council for excuses from the annual meetings they were also requesting the Privy Council to issue protections from creditors. Many chiefs were faced with the threat of imprisonment by their creditors if they entered Edinburgh. As a result, the Privy Council began issuing protections which guaranteed the chief's liberty for a specific time frame to enable the council and the chiefs to conduct government business as well as allowing the chiefs to resolve their debts within the city limits. The protection discharged all officers of the law from troubling or arresting the said chief for his debts. It appears that the Privy Council put greater emphasis on the ability to conduct government business with the chiefs that would further promote their 'civility', rather than concerning themselves with private financial dealings.

Such protections increased in frequency due to the increase of indebtedness among the chiefs. The number of protections being issued by the Privy Council

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<sup>17</sup> *RPC*, 2<sup>nd</sup> series, v, 560-1.



grew to such an extent that within the *Register of the Privy Council for Scotland* the Minute Book of Processes gives a memorandum, entitled “Protectiones for severall persones”, which only lists the names of those granted protections rather than providing an elaborate detail of the protection. However, in some cases, protections to prominent figures were given in minimal detail as seen in the documentation regarding the protections of the Earl of Caithness and branches of the Clan MacLean. The 1621 act which provided for the granting of protections was quickly taken advantage of by the Earl of Caithness and his son Lord Berridale in 1623. Although Caithness is not within the Western Highlands and Isles, the inclusion of the earl and his son provides an example of the negative effect that the issuance of protections could have on an estate due to the abuse of the system which allowed Caithness to circumvent his creditors and continue to accrue debts and interest. According to the *Register of the Privy Council for Scotland* the Council granted a protection to Caithness and Berridale on 12 June 1623 and it was to expire on the 20<sup>th</sup> of August so that they might enter Edinburgh to negotiate with their creditors.<sup>18</sup> No less than nine extensions to the original protection were granted on behalf of the Earl of Caithness and Lord Berridale which effectively extended protection from 24 June 1624 to 31 March 1627.<sup>19</sup> The intention of granting protections was to help preserve the standing of many nobles and Highland chiefs and to prevent their financial ruin; however, the extensions issued to Caithness and Berridale appeared to Charles I to be a hindrance and were not aiding the nobles. By allowing them to continually delay an agreement with their creditors and in the process accumulate interest, the financial situation of Caithness and Berridale was worsened and, as implied in a the letter from Charles I to the Privy Council in 1626,<sup>20</sup> the time had come to settle their debts before further ruin was brought on their house.

In contrast to the abuse of protections by Caithness and Berridale, the details of the protections issued to Sir Lachlan MacLean of Morvern and Hector MacLean, apparent of Duart, illustrate that the proper use of protections proved vital to their compliance with the laws of the realm. On 6 December 1631 Sir Lachlan MacLean

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<sup>18</sup> *RPC*, xiii, 253.

<sup>19</sup> Extensions were granted on 25 August 1624, 31 May 1625, 14 July 1625, 30 August 1625, 29 November 1625, 24 February 1626, 28 March 1626, and 25 June 1626. *RPC*, xiii, 597; *RPC* 2<sup>nd</sup> series, i, 38, 74, 125, 207, 241, 257, 317.

<sup>20</sup> *RPC*, 2<sup>nd</sup> series, i, 448.



of Morvern requested a protection from his creditors in order to enter Edinburgh free from prosecution allowing him to resolve his debts with various creditors. Sir Lachlan was granted the necessary protection which was to remain in effect until 31 January 1632. However, Sir Lachlan's protection was later extended to 30 April 1632 so that he would be able to remain in Edinburgh and appear before the Privy Council to resolve a financial dispute between himself and Hector MacLean, apparent of Duart.<sup>21</sup> In order for the Privy Council to resolve the conflict between MacLean of Morvern and MacLean of Duart it was deemed necessary to issue a similar protection to Hector MacLean because the Council had been informed that Sir Lachlan intended to have Hector MacLean arrested for outstanding debts owed to Sir Lachlan, and it was imperative that Hector be able to appear before the Council to answer to the charges brought against him by Sir Lachlan. Therefore, on 13 March 1632 Hector MacLean and Lachlan MacLean of Coll, were issued protections until the 27<sup>th</sup> of March, but like Sir Lachlan MacLean of Morvern their protections were extended until 15 April in order to allow the Council to resolve the matter.<sup>22</sup> The protections issued to the MacLeans serve as a prime example of the growing financial troubles of the chiefs of the Western Highlands and Isles; both chiefs were severely in debt and in order to ruin the other and potentially gain financially one kinsman threatened to imprison the other. The growing lists of protections granted to Highlanders and recorded in the *Register of the Privy Council* are indicative of the overall financial epidemic of the region.

The financial difficulties of many of the chiefs in the Western Highlands and Isles were worsened by the effects of the Scottish Revolution. The costs of the fighting campaigns and the subsequent devastations resulting from the wars only served to exacerbate the precarious position of many clans. Direct evidence of the financial impact of the military campaigns is limited; however it is reasonable to assume the cost was large. A rough estimate of the military expenditure can be deduced from the personal expenses of the Marquis of Argyll. Although Argyll was the most involved actor in the wars and therefore had the greatest expenses, the ratio of his personal expenses to the payments received from the Covenant regime

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<sup>21</sup> *RPC*, 2<sup>nd</sup> series, iv, 385, 426.

<sup>22</sup> *RPC*, 2<sup>nd</sup> series, iv, 445.



illustrates the financial deficit of those involved in the military campaigns. Argyll's activities during the Bishops' Wars personally cost him £72,004. This sum included the costs of suppressing dissent, advancing taxation, public loans from Argyll and the Isles, donating silver, patrolling the North Channel, and fortifying Kintyre all of which was for the Covenant cause. However, of the £72,004 paid out by Argyll only £19,167 was reimbursed by the Covenant regime leaving Argyll with a financial deficit of £52,837.<sup>23</sup> It can be assumed that the reimbursement made to Argyll was greater than those made to lesser Covenanters due to Argyll's high rank within the regime; therefore, Argyll's ratio of expenditure to reimbursement serves as a best case scenario. For other nobles this ratio can be assumed to be much less than that of Argyll's which resulted in many being near bankrupt.

To complicate matters for many of the landholders in the Highlands, especially in the Western Highlands and Isles, the devastation left in the wake of the military campaigns left many estates utterly ruined and severely impacted their ability to collect their rents. As explained by Prof. Keith Brown, "land is of little value if it fails in its primary function of growing crops and grazing stock, and when all is said and done noble wealth was largely dependent on a fairly insecure agricultural economy";<sup>24</sup> therefore, territorial devastation effectively destroyed the nobles' income. A bulk of the devastation was inflicted on the Clan Campbell and their allies by Alasdair MacColla, his Irish regiments, and his Western Highland contingents. The burning of crops and the stealing or slaughter of livestock within Campbell territory carried out by MacColla hit the Campbells where it hurt the most, in the pocket book. According to the *Book of the Thanes of Cawdor* the rents collected from Campbell of Cawdor's lands in Islay and Muckairn averaged between £20,000 and £22,000 annually prior to the war. However, in 1651 the reported rental income plummeted 90% to £2,216 10s 2d.<sup>25</sup> Likewise, the Campbells of Glenorchy also faced a drastic reduction in their rental income. Due to the raids of Montrose and MacColla "in the zeiris of God 1644 and 1645 the laird of Glenorchy his whole landis and esteatt betuixt the foord of Lyon and point of Lismoir weir

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<sup>23</sup> Macinnes, *Clanship, Commerce and the House of Stuart*, 98.

<sup>24</sup> K. Brown, "Aristocratic Finances and the Origins of the Scottish Revolution", *English Historical Review* 104 (1989), 46-87, at p. 58.

<sup>25</sup> C. Innes, (ed.), *The Book of the Thanes of Cawdor: A Series of Papers Selected from the Charter Room at Cawdor, 1236-1742* (Spalding Club, 1859), 303.



brunt and destroyit” which were estimated to have caused 1,200,000 merks damage.<sup>26</sup> The destruction of Glenorchy’s estates clearly had a severe negative impact on his rents, “all the rent of the estait did not reach 2800 merks be reason of the devastations”.<sup>27</sup> Lastly, a letter from Mr. John Middleton to the Marquis of Argyll illustrates the damage done to those allied with the Campbells and the Covenant regime. On 14 January 1646 Mr. Middleton wrote to Argyll requesting aid to be given to Duncan Forbes of Culloden by the Committee of Estates:

...he hes all his Lands spoiled and waisted by the Rebels, his Corne burnt, and truelie himself brought to that extremitie, that unless his loss be taken to consideration he cannot be able to subsist...This I thought fit to represent to your Lordship, and shall intreat in his behalff that your Lordship will befriend him at the Committees, and by thinking upon some way both how his loss may be repaired, and for his subsistence in the mean tyme, in respect of his fidelity and constancie.<sup>28</sup>

The indebtedness of the chiefs in the Western Highlands and Isles gave rise to an increase in money lending. Due to the increasing indebtedness of Lowland nobles an extensive debt market was already developing around Glasgow and Edinburgh, and the addition of the debts from the chiefs expanded the market in the Lowlands and extended it into the Highlands, primarily within the Campbell sphere. There were few men in the Western Highlands and Isles who had the economic resources to be creditors, therefore, the extension of the debt market into the region was primarily facilitated by Archibald Campbell, Marquis of Argyll, his son Archibald, Lord Lorne, and George Campbell, sheriff depute of Argyll. As a result, when hostilities broke out in the Highlands in the 1640s a number of allegiances were based on the involvement of the Campbells in the debt market.<sup>29</sup>

Often individuals would borrow relatively small sums from other chiefs or larger sums from the Campbells or lawyers and merchants in the Lowlands. The debt markets had both a political and financial function because of the obligations

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<sup>26</sup> C. Innes, (ed.), *The Black Book of Taymouth: With other papers from the Breadalbane Charter Room* (Kilchurn Society, 1986), 96, 102.

<sup>27</sup> NAS, Breadalbane Muniments, GD112/39/113/23.

<sup>28</sup> D. Forbes, (ed.), *Culloden Papers* (London, 1875), 5-6.

<sup>29</sup> For details of the economic impact on allegiances see chapter 7 “Western Highlands and Isles Allegiances” especially the MacLeans of Duart’s reaction to the financial manipulations of the Marquis of Argyll.



set out in the contracts between creditor and debtor as well as with the cautioner to the debt.<sup>30</sup> It was not uncommon for a lesser clan chief to loan his superior money or to stand caution for him in another contract. This new relationship often placed the lesser chief in a beneficial social situation due to the favor he performed for his superior. A prime example of this is the transaction between Campbell of Argyll and Campbell of Glenorchy. In 1634 Sir Colin Campbell of Glenorchy gave Archibald Campbell, future Marquis of Argyll, 8,000 merks in exchange for Argyll's bond that he would not question Glenorchy's rights of the lands he held in Argyll.<sup>31</sup> However, this new relationship also put many in financial trouble because many superiors did not pay their debts and the obligation to pay was passed down to the cautioners. For example, as cautioners, both Sir Donald MacDonald of Sleat and John MacLeod of Dunvegan were forced to accept responsibility for Argyll's debt of £10,000 on 14 December 1633.<sup>32</sup> For those lesser chiefs and various money lenders who were able to collect on their loans their economic situation improved due to the interest rates imposed on the debtor, which was eight percent on the principal, but those unable to collect were forced to turn to the justice system in order to get satisfaction.

The process of borrowing money was not as difficult as trying to collect on defaulted payments. When a chief or noble was in need of financial assistance he would sign an obligation to their creditor, either to pay back money borrowed or to pay off a merchant or lawyer bill. The obligation was a straightforward document which stated the names of the creditor and the borrower with the principal sum and often the interest rate, as well as the due date of payment. Unfortunately for the creditor, the necessary steps to collect on the loan were not as easy. In many cases the debtor would default on his payment and issue a second or third obligation with a new payment date. As a result, many debts went uncollected for years and many creditors were forced to turn to raising an apprising.

When a debtor was delinquent in his payment the creditor petitioned the crown for letters of apprising to be issued under the signet. The letters of apprising were addressed to the messenger-at-arms who was instructed to summon a court of

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<sup>30</sup> Dodghson, *From Chiefs to Landlords*, 36.

<sup>31</sup> *The Black Book of Taymouth*, 77 & 261.

<sup>32</sup> *The Book of Duvegan*, 178.



apprising in either the head burgh of the territory or in Edinburgh “wher advyse may be had”.<sup>33</sup> The messenger-at-arms was a public servant and served as an executive officer of the law appointed by the Lord Lyon; his primary duty was to collect outstanding debts on the creditor’s behalf.<sup>34</sup> Once letters of apprising were issued the first step taken by the messenger-at-arms was to charge the debtor to pay according to his legal obligation. If the debtor remained obstinate, the messenger-at-arms denounced the debtor a rebel and began the process of poinding. Poinding was the seizure by the messenger-at-arms and his assistants of moveable goods, with the exception of laboring animals and steelbow, as collateral on the debt. If poinding failed to resolve the debt, often because the moveable goods were not sufficient to cover the debt, the next step was to apprise the heritable property of the debtor.<sup>35</sup>

The apprising of property was allowed to be carried out only when it was deemed that the total value of moveable goods and cattle was insufficient. The decret of apprising which authorized the process of forfeiture required an independent party, led by the messenger-at-arms, to assess and calculate a monetary value on the estate. Once the estate had been valued the debtor was given a final opportunity to resolve his debt. If payment was still not received the creditor was given permission to use any means necessary to acquire his portion of the appraised estate which equaled the amount of principal, the interest owed, and the sheriff’s fee which was 12d. per £ Scots owed.<sup>36</sup> This last step resulted in a sasine being issued and the creditor being given the appropriate portion of the debtor’s estate. Although the debtor’s estate had essentially been foreclosed on, there remained a final option for the debtor to regain possession which appears rarely to have been a viable option.<sup>37</sup> Appraised lands were redeemable as long as the payment was made in one lump sum which included the amount owed for principal, interest, sheriff’s fees, and other expenses accumulated during the apprising and infetment of the estate. However, there was a statute of limitation that specified that the redemption of the

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<sup>33</sup> P. Gouldesbrough, *Formulary of Old Scots Legal Documents* (Stair Society, 1985), 115; Sir Thomas Hope, *Major Practicks 1608-33*, 2 vols., ed. J. Clyde (Stair Society, 1937-8), VI.28.7.

<sup>34</sup> M.H.B. Sanderson, *Mary Stewart’s People: Life in Mary Stewart’s Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1987), 136-7.

<sup>35</sup> Hope, *Major Practicks*, VI.28.8, 41 & 42; Sanderson, *Mary Stewart’s People*, 138.

<sup>36</sup> Hope, *Major Practicks*, VI.28.36.

<sup>37</sup> No evidence was found that any apprisings from the Western Highlands and Isles were redeemed by the debtor.



apprised land had to be conducted within seven years of the apprising, unless the debtor was a minor in which case he had until his 25<sup>th</sup> birthday regardless of the seven year expiry date, otherwise the debtor was without recourse.<sup>38</sup>

In an attempt to ward off the creditors, many chiefs and nobles were inclined to grant wadsets to their kinsmen and allies, but in dire situations were forced to rely on anybody financially solvent, including those not considered friendly to the clan. A wadset was a real estate transaction that gave temporary possession of a designated piece of land with its income attached in exchange for a lump sum of money. One technical aspect of wadsets that classified the transaction as a loan rather than a sale was the mandatory inclusion of a reversionary clause. The reversion stipulated that the chief who granted the wadset was allowed to buy back his estate with interest, and although the provision was there to regain their estate often many were unable to. In some cases the reversionary clause was unrealistic due to the principal borrowed, the interest owed, or even the date by which the debt had to be paid. The issuing of wadsets was common practice after the Reformation due to the new laws regarding usury, or the charging of interest; by the middle of the seventeenth century the frequency of wadsets being issued increased in proportion to the excessive debts accrued by many nobles and chiefs. Many chiefs were forced to wadset a majority of their territory to pay other debts; in essence the chiefs used wadsets in order to rob Peter to pay Paul. The increasing interaction with the debt market and the number of wadsets against the chief's estate only served to temporarily relieve their financial situation.<sup>39</sup> The clan's long term economic status worsened because at some point the creditors would collect on their loans.

Given the complex nature of seventeenth-century economics it proves beneficial to examine the economic situation of specific clans in order to see how the mechanism functioned in practice. By conducting case studies of Clanranald, Clan Lamont, and Campbell of Glenorchy the intricate procedures for accruing debt and collecting on debts can be put into context. These clans have been selected for two reasons: the availability of documents and the fact that they are typical representations of various debt patterns. A long list of indebted clans can be

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<sup>38</sup> Hope, *Major Practicks*, III.11.6 & 18, VI.28.38; Gouldesbrough, *Formulary*, 115.

<sup>39</sup> Dodghson, *From Chiefs to Landlords*, 37.



compiled which would include, among others, MacLeod of Dunvegan, MacLean of Duart, and the Earl of Seaforth; however, the extensiveness of documents for Clanranald, Lamont, and Glenorchy facilitates the most complete accounting of their indebtedness and, thus, provides the clearest examples of debt patterns. An investigation into the financial transactions of John MacRanald of Moidart, Captain of Clanranald, reveals a chief faced with the possibility of financial ruin and how, through creative real estate transactions, he was able to salvage his clan's socio-economic status. In contrast to Clanranald, the examination of the finances of Sir James Lamont of Lamont renders an extreme example of a chief near complete ruin due to his extensive borrowing for the royalist regime and his defaulting on numerous loans. Lastly, the economic details of the Campbells of Glenorchy illustrate the fact that indebtedness was a non-discriminating epidemic and highlights the economic effects of the Civil Wars experienced by many landholders.

The bulk of the financial difficulties of John MacRanald of Moidart, Captain of Clanranald, can be dated back to as early as the 1610s with the institution of the annual appearances before the Privy Council. For Clanranald this proved to be an expensive venture due to the recurrent hostilities of his clan. A letter from Rory Mor MacLeod of Dunvegan to James VI, in 1622, requested to be excused from the annual meetings and included a request that Clanranald also be excused so that he too could resolve his debts. According to MacLeod, his son-in-law, Clanranald, was unable to pay the large debts accumulated by his father through his attempts at "reducing his kin, tenants and neighbours to the king's obedience".<sup>40</sup> Every instance of insurrection by the Clanranald resulted in the chief losing his surety, which averaged 10,000 merks, and in some cases resulted in additional fines or reparations being charged to the chief. Although Clanranald was already suffering from large debts due to his clan's lawlessness their hostile behavior continued through the first half of the seventeenth century and complicated his financial situation to such a point he was forced to turn to Lord Lorne, eldest son of the Marquis of Argyll, for assistance in paying his debts.

Between 1625 and 1627 piracy throughout the Western Isles was rampant; one particular incident which cost Clanranald dearly was an attack on a merchant

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<sup>40</sup> NLS, MS 2133, p.113-4.



ship out of Glasgow by his kinsmen and the Clan MacIan in 1627. In the autumn of 1627 Clanranald and Clan MacIan boarded a ship off of the coast of Barra where they ate and drank the cargo which included tea, wines, and various other victuals. They then took with them a further “5 butts of wine, 8 casks of herring, 8 score of pounds, 300 double ells of plaiding”.<sup>41</sup> At the following Privy Council meeting Clanranald was ordered to give satisfaction to the Glasgow merchants for the goods robbed by “him, his tennentis and followaris” and was kept in ward in Edinburgh and Canongate until 29 November 1627.<sup>42</sup> Clanranald’s liberty was granted on the condition he promised to behave himself as a good and peacable subject. Aside from promising to obey the laws of the realm, Clanranald was required to also see “God honnoured” and “the resoirt and ressett of Jesuitis and priests restreaned”. He was to ensure the ministers were cherished, and was “not [to] heir messe nor suffer it to be said in his boundis” under pain of 10,000 merks. To verify that these conditions would be fulfilled Clanranald was to meet and confer with the Bishop of Dunblane and others “quhairby he may be instructed in the trew religioun and resave resolutioun of his doubtis and scruples thairin”.<sup>43</sup> These additional conditions to his release would later result in supplementary financial ramifications due to his religious convictions.

Upon release from ward Clanranald obeyed the Privy Council’s order to make reparation for the goods stolen from the ship. A discharge by Walter Stirling, merchant burgess of Glasgow, recorded in the Clanranald Papers, states that Clanranald was discharged “for certain sums of money on account of goods which they took in the isle of Barra from a ship of Leith, sailing from the river Clyd to the town of Danskine”.<sup>44</sup> Clearly this incident cost Clanranald a great deal of money: not only did he have to pay the surety for his clan’s disobedience, he was also forced to pay for the goods they stole and had to promise another surety of 10,000 merks.

Although this financial impact was detrimental it was apparently not enough to persuade him to follow the religious conditions dictated in his grant of liberty. The fact that Clanranald ignored the religious implications of his release is made

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<sup>41</sup> A. McDonald & A. McDonald, *Clan Donald* 4vols (Inverness, 1896-1904), ii, 326.

<sup>42</sup> *RPC*, 2<sup>nd</sup>, ii, 28.

<sup>43</sup> *RPC*, 2<sup>nd</sup>, ii, 137.

<sup>44</sup> NAS, Clanranald Papers, GD201/1/18.



evident in his continued support of the Irish Franciscan missionaries. In 1630 Clanranald was forced to surrender his surety again, which resulted in his having to pay another 10,000 merks, for interfering with the apprehension of the Irish Franciscan missionary, Fr. Patrick Hegarty, and was to transport and exhibit two kinsmen resulting in additional costs for their travel expenses.<sup>45</sup>

While Clanranald was faced with extraordinary expenses due to his clan's lawlessness he still had other financial commitments to meet, such as annualrents and teinds. Analysis of the obligations and discharges of Clanranald indicates that a great deal of his expenditure went to annualrents, teind and taxation payments. A discharge from John Gordon of Buckie, sheriff of Inverness, records a payment made by John MacDonald of Illinditrim, Captain of Clanranald, on 14 August 1627 of £365 Scots as three terms' payment of taxation that was granted to his Majesty in October 1625.<sup>46</sup> The next mention of taxation payments made by Clanranald does not appear until August 1630 when Adam Keltie, clerk of the Exchequer, issued a discharge to him for £11 Scots as four terms' payment of taxation for his lands in Ballevanich and £48 16s Scots as teind payment for financial support of the Bishop of the Isles.<sup>47</sup>

Many of the obligations and discharges were not as specific as those relating to taxation in regards to the original contract; many discharges merely stated the amount paid, to whom and when. For example, a discharge by Colin MacKenzie, Earl of Seaforth, issued on 20 August 1630, stated that Clanranald made a partial payment of 800 merks for his annualrent of 8,000 merks and paid 12,000 merks as part payment of the principal sum owed to Seaforth, but the specific territory associated with these payments was not clearly defined.<sup>48</sup> However, further investigation reveals that Clanranald held the 27 merk land of Moidart and the 24 merk land of Arisaig from the Earl of Seaforth. Later payments to the Earl of Seaforth verify that the land in question was Moidart and Arisaig as Clanranald was

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<sup>45</sup> *RPC*, 2<sup>nd</sup>, iv, 391. For more on Clanranald's support of the missionaries see chapter 4 "Religion from Reformation to War", especially Clanranald's letter to Pope Urban VIII in 1626.

<sup>46</sup> NAS, Clanranald Papers, GD201/1/14. John MacRanald of Moidart, Captain of Clanranald, also went by the title of MacRanald of Illinditrim due to his possess of the island castle of Tioram in Moidart.

<sup>47</sup> NAS, Clanranald Papers, GD201/1/25.

<sup>48</sup> NAS, Clanranald Papers, GD201/1/28. The term annualrent was often used to represent the interest charged on a loan or consisted of an annuity.



issued another discharge for 204 merks as “feu-duty” on these lands on 2 March 1633.<sup>49</sup> The sum total of the annualrent and feu-duty payments made by Clanranald to Seaforth, as well as to MacLeod of Alaskar, Cameron of Lochiel, Guthrie of Gagie and Lord Lorne constitutes the majority of his expenditures. Between 1629 and 1635 the combined total paid in annualrent and feu-duties equaled 24,234 merks. It appears from surviving documents that many of the annualrents constituted both feu-duty payments as well as interest payments even when the distinction is not clearly stated. Although it is difficult to state with certainty which payment is being made at any given time, statements such as “for £84 as annual rent of 1,261 merks” used in the discharge from Guthrie of Gagie indicates a high probability that the payment was for interest against the original debt of 1,261 merks. Therefore, the 24,234 merks Clanranald paid between 1629 and 1633 can be classified into the following categories: 2,204 merks to Seaforth for both feu-duty and interest payments, 10,700 merks to MacLeod in interest payments, 2,000 merks to Cameron for feu-duty payments, 126 merks to Guthrie in interest payments, and 9,204 merks to Lorne for feu-duty payments.<sup>50</sup>

No valuation rolls exist for the years between 1629 and 1633; however, a valuation roll of the Isles compiled in 1644 gives some insight into a portion of Clanranald’s income. According to the valuation roll his estate in the Isles was worth £9,700 or 14,697 merks a year, making him the fifth largest landholder in Inverness and Ross: £1,733 6s 8d for Eigg, £4,000 for his lands in the parish of Skirn and Kilphedder, and £4,000 for his lands in Kilmorie.<sup>51</sup> If the 24,234 merks owed between 1629 and 1635 are spread over the six years in which it was accumulated it would equal roughly a debt of 4,000 merks a year which could have been easily offset by the projected income from Clanranald’s island estates. Therefore, it is surprising that in 1633 Clanranald was faced with such financial difficulties that he was forced to enter a contract with Lord Lorne; however, these figures do not yet include the financial transactions with merchant burgesses, including Clanranald’s largest creditor, Archibald Thomsone.

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<sup>49</sup> NAS, Clanranald Papers, GD201/1/35.

<sup>50</sup> NAS, Clanranald Papers, GD201/1/23; GD201/1/28; GD201/1/33; GD201/1/35; GD201/1/42; GD201/1/44; GD201/5/906; GD201/5/908; GD201/5/911.

<sup>51</sup> C. Fraser-Mackintosh, *Antiquarian Notes* (Stirling, 1913), 360 & 370-1.



Like many chiefs from the Western Highlands and Isles, Clanranald participated in the extensive debt market established in Edinburgh and Glasgow. Many of the debts owed by Clanranald to various merchants were small sums ranging from 40 to 200 merks. Analyzing the same time frame, 1629 to 1635, the total owed to merchants was at least 8,798 merks.<sup>52</sup> If we extend the date to 1642 the total increases only 2,200 merks.<sup>53</sup> However, of the total owed 8,208 merks was due solely to Archibald Thomsone, tailor burghess of Edinburgh. According to a bond issued by Thomsone in favor of Clanranald in November 1632 in which Thomsone was “superseding payment til Whitsunday 1633”, Clanranald owed Thomsone “£5,472 Scots and other sums”.<sup>54</sup> This bond is one of the main reasons Clanranald turned to Lord Lorne for financial assistance in 1633.

In an attempt to resolve his financial crisis, which arose from the combination of fines for lawlessness, annual rents, and bonds owed to burgesses, Clanranald turned over his debts to Archibald Campbell, Lord Lorne, in 1633. An agreement was reached between the two in which Lorne would advance Clanranald money to pay his creditors in exchange for superiority over Moidart and Arisaig. A draft contract between Clanranald and Lorne dated 1 June 1633 stated that Lorne was assigned the debts owing to Sir Donald MacDonald of Sleat totaling 26,921 merks 10s 8d and “to that effect to use ane lawfull ordour of redemptione conforme to the tenor of the reversione”.<sup>55</sup> In looking at “Ane compt of the money payit and advancit be my Lord Lorne for the capitane of ClanRannald at the terme of mertimes 1633” we see that the first item paid by Lorne was to Sleat for the exact sum of 26,921 merks 10s 8d.<sup>56</sup> This transaction is officially recorded in detail on 29 June 1633 in the *Argyll Sasines* where the exact flow of money is finalized. What appears to have transpired is that Lorne advanced Clanranald the money to pay his debt to Sleat and enable Clanranald to receive from Sleat a reversion on the original wadset between Sleat and Clanranald issued on 22 February 1633; then Clanranald renounced the reversion in favor of Lorne, effectively transferring the wadset and

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<sup>52</sup> NAS, Clanranald Papers, GD201/1/27; GD201/29; GD201/1/32; GD201/1/34; GD201/1/46. This sum is based on the surviving documents in the archive and is, therefore, a rough figure due to the possibility that not all debts are accounted for.

<sup>53</sup> NAS, Clanranald Papers, GD201/1/49; GD201/1/50; GD201/1/53; GD201/1/55; GD201/1/56.

<sup>54</sup> NAS, Clanranald Papers, GD201/1/34.

<sup>55</sup> NAS, Clanranald Papers, GD201/5/903.

<sup>56</sup> NAS, Clanranald Papers, GD201/5/902.



attached debt owed by Clanranald from Sleat to Lorne. According to the original contract, in exchange for clearing his debts to MacDonald of Sleat, Clanranald “be the tenor heirof binds and obleiss him his aires successors and signayis foirsaides to presentlie entir and posses the said nobill Lord [Lorne] and his forsaides in and to the landis underwrettine”.<sup>57</sup> These lands included the territories of Arisaig and Moidart laid out in the original wadset to Sleat and lands held by Clanranald under the superiority of the Earl of Seaforth for other debts paid on Clanranald’s behalf, primarily to Archibald Thomsone.

Although Clanranald no longer owed outstanding debts to Sleat and to Archibald Thomsone, he now owed Lord Lorne a total of 32,971 merks 10s 8d. The only payment made against this debt appears to have been in 1634 and according to the accounting of Lorne’s payments on behalf of Clanranald the sum was only 1,300 merks.<sup>58</sup> As a consequence of his failure to reimburse Lorne, Clanranald was forced to convert the wadset transferred to Lorne in 1622 into an irredeemable sasine of the 27 merk land of Moidart and 25 merk land of Arisaig. The sasine registered 15 August 1634 gave Lorne legal superiority over Clanranald’s estates which were held in feufarm of the Earl of Seaforth. Therefore, Clanranald was to pay an annualrent to Lorne as his immediate superior and out of that payment Lorne would forward on the appropriate sum due as feu-duty to Seaforth. The end result was that as of September 1634 Clanranald paid 1,602 merks 6s 8d “for the Rent and dewtie of theis Landis with the pertments sett”,<sup>59</sup> and Lorne would pay Seaforth the 204 merks feu-duty on the lands.<sup>60</sup> The purpose of this sasine was to ensure that Lorne would eventually be reimbursed by charging Clanranald around 1,400 merks in excess of the original feu-duty.

The financial dealings between Clanranald, MacDonald of Sleat, and Lord Lorne were complicated transactions which in the long run did relieve a majority of Clanranald’s indebtedness. Although the original creditors were paid off, Clanranald still owed over 32,000 merks but instead of it being owed to various

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<sup>57</sup> NAS, Clanranald Papers, GD201/5/903.

<sup>58</sup> NAS, Clanranald Papers, GD201/5/902.

<sup>59</sup> NAS, Clanranald Papers, GD201/5/908.

<sup>60</sup> The actual payment made by Lorne to Seaforth could not be located; however a discharge to Clanranald in 1633 indicates that the feu-duty on the 20 merk land of Arisaig and 27 merk land of Moydart was 204 merks.



creditors the debts were transferred to Lord Lorne and meant that he was still faced with a financial crisis. Although Clanranald was forced to pay a larger annual rent for his property he was able to maintain possession of his estate. The 1634 sasine effectively rolled his debts and rent into one lump sum which allowed him to make regular payments against the debt and, thus, avoid complete forfeiture of his estate. By consolidating his debts under one creditor, Lord Lorne, Clanranald got his clan back on the right financial track and enabled the clan to retain their socio-economic status in the Western Highlands and Isles.

The financial ruin of Sir James Lamont of Lamont in 1646 proves a valuable case study of the monetary impact of the Civil Wars. Although Lamont was faced with excessive debts by 1638 the level of his borrowing reached new heights due to his military campaigning for the royalist cause. Between 1634 and 1638 Lamont had borrowed over £21,000, but between 1639 and 1645 he had added another £33,000 principal to his overall debt.<sup>61</sup> A “Note” prepared in retrospect by an advisor to the Marquis of Argyll in 1660 addresses the actions of Lamont during the course of the Civil Wars:

In anno 1640, he [Lamont] being drown’d in debt made ane fashion to undertake some service for the king as one means to recover his estate, bot how far he heard that there wes any discovery of it, he wreat ane lettir to the Committee of Estates, swearing by his solemn & great oath, and under all the paynes contained in the law & gospell, that in effect he should do no more so, and sent therein the secrets he was upon for his Majesty’s service.<sup>62</sup>

The analysis of Sir James’s borrowing indicates that he was gambling with his clan’s financial resources on the outcome of the Scottish Revolution, and as indicated in the “Note” he was already in debt and was shifting his allegiances to save his estate from financial ruin. The fact that only three payments were made on his outstanding loans supports the argument that Sir James believed the money he borrowed to support the king’s cause would be reimbursed or absolved when the royalists won the war. Further evidence that Sir James involved himself in a risk which was extremely speculative as to the outcome of the war was that he did not borrow from his own kinsmen; rather, they were employed as cautioners.

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<sup>61</sup> H. McKechnie, *The Lamont Clan 1235-1935* (Edinburgh, 1938), 156.

<sup>62</sup> Stonefield MSS I, fol 122 as quoted in H. McKechnie, *The Lamont Clan*, 158.



Unfortunately, Lamont's gamble failed and in 1646 his creditors foreclosed on his estate. In an attempt to regain possession Lamont admitted to Charles II that by 1656 the total debt he incurred for the royalist cause was over £64,000.

In order to clearly grasp the severity of the indebtedness of Sir James Lamont the income of Lamont's estate in Cowal needs brief mention. In 1642 Lamont's total income in cash and kind was roughly £5,000 a year. Out of that total income, Lamont had to pay out about one-fifth for teinds and at least one-tenth for estate management and clan administration, leaving him with a disposable income of about £3,500 a year.<sup>63</sup> According to the documents collected in *An Inventory of Lamont Papers*, Lamont's accumulation of debt began in 1634. By 1638 he already owed over £21,000 which if divided over the four years that he accumulated the debt shows that he borrowed over £5,000 a year. By 1645 this would increase to over £7,000 a year borrowed in the name of the "king's cause",<sup>64</sup> making it mathematically impossible to salvage his estate from foreclosure. According to Sir James's admission that he owed £64,000 in 1656, the total debt he had accumulated exceeded the whole value of his estate by one-third.<sup>65</sup>

A survey of Sir James Lamont's obligations compiled in *The Lamont Papers* provides a glimpse of his excessive borrowing on the eve of the royalist campaign of 1644-5. The majority of the obligations issued by Sir James between 1639 and 1645 averaged 2,000 merks with the largest number being issued between 1643 and 1645. The largest single obligation issued during this period was to George Campbell, sheriff depute of Argyll, for £5,000 payable at Candlemas 1645.<sup>66</sup> Unbeknownst to Campbell, Lamont was outwardly supporting the Covenant regime while secretly plotting with the royalist regime. The fact that Sir James was in need of large sums to mount his secretive royalist campaign is made evident in the dramatic rise in the sums and frequency of his borrowing. The increase in obligations issued by Lamont to train and equip his men coincided with the preparations being made by royalists,

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<sup>63</sup> N. Lamont of Knockdow, Sir, ed., *An Inventory of Lamont Papers 1231-1897* (Edinburgh, 1914), 153-4.

<sup>64</sup> H. McKechnie, *Lamont Clan*, 156.

<sup>65</sup> N. Lamont, *An Inventory of Lamont Papers*, 156. Lamont cited the total owed as including the foreclosed estate in his report to Charles II in the hopes of having his debts cleared and the sasines on his estate reversed because they were the result of his royalist support.

<sup>66</sup> N. Lamont, *An Inventory of Lamont Papers*, 192.



such as the Earls of Antrim and Atholl, for a joint military venture between Irish Catholic regiments and Highland royalists.

Of the obligations printed in *The Lamont Papers* only five appear to have been issued between 1639 and 1642 and totaled roughly 2,500 merks, but between 1643 and 1645 Sir James issued eight obligations, four of which were issued in February 1643, and totaled 18,952 merks. Although the obligations are valuable pieces of information that point toward an increase in Sir James's debts they are incomplete; of the £33,000 borrowed between 1639 and 1645 these obligations constitute only £19,658. In order to get a more detailed account of Sir James Lamont's finances the appraisings raised by a handful of his creditors provide more specific information as to the exact amount of the debts owed by Sir James after the collapse of the royalist campaign.

Sir James Lamont's financial gamble came to a climax on 30 October 1646 when four of his chief creditors successfully filed appraisings against his estate and were later granted sasines to the bulk of his property. The first appraising raised against Sir James Lamont was by George Campbell, sheriff depute of Argyll, on 24 October 1646. An interesting note on this appraising is the fact that George Campbell was a dedicated Covenanter and was obviously pursuing Lamont's debts because of his royalist support, hence the process of appraising being enacted in 1646 immediately following the collapse of the royalist campaign. The fact that the Campbells viewed Lamont as a "turn-coat" due to his unforeseen shift in allegiance to the royalists when the Irish regiments arrived in Cowal added to the animosity with which George Campbell proceeded against Lamont. According to the Decreet of Appraising, Sir James refused to make payments on the several bonds issued to Campbell and others which totaled £9,800.<sup>67</sup> Failure on the part of Sir James to make restitution resulted in George Campbell being infefted by a Precept from the Chancery in the lands and barony of Inneryne which was simultaneously enforced by a crown charter on 30 October 1646. As compensation for the £9,800 principal and £490 "Sheriff fee" Campbell was granted the "lands and barony of Inneryne with the church lands of Killenane, the town and lands of Killenane extending to three merk land of old extent, with an annual rent of 40s of the same, and rectorial

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<sup>67</sup> N. Lamont, *An Inventory of Lamont Papers*, 201.



and vicarial teinds of the parish church of Killenane”.<sup>68</sup> Similarly, a crown charter granted to John Stewart, fiar of Balscharge, as assignee for Henry Glen, merchant burghess of Glasgow, carved out a portion of Lamont’s estate for failure to pay 3,900 merks and included £130 for the “Sheriff fee”.<sup>69</sup> The third apprising to be filed on 30 October 1646 was at the insistence of William Home, sometime Baillie of Glasgow, for “payment to Home for himself and as trustee for several other persons”. The combined amount owed by Sir James was an astonishing £28,222 6s 8d plus the “Sheriff fee” of £1,411 2s.<sup>70</sup> The last apprising filed in October 1646 was by John Herbertson for payment of £846 13 s 4d and £42 6s 8d for the “Sheriff fee”.<sup>71</sup> Therefore, the combined sum of these October appraisings, including the fees, totaled £46,850. Following on these appraisings and crown charters all four men were issued Sasines on Crown Charter to their designated portions of Lamont’s estate; George Campbell and John Stewart’s were issued November 1646 while William Home and John Herbertson’s were issued April 1647.<sup>72</sup>

Like many chiefs who became financially involved in the military campaigns of both the Covenanters and royalists, Lamont believed that any debts incurred for the cause would be remedied when his faction won. Unfortunately for Lamont, he chose the losing side and because he had originally given his support to the Covenanters and later shifted his allegiance he was dealt with harshly by his Covenanting creditors. By the spring of 1647 Lamont was officially bankrupt to the point that his wife, Dame Margaret Campbell, Lady Lamont, was forced to petition for power and warrant to be granted to her and her children to make use and enjoy the “conjunct fee lands” provided for her by her marriage contract. Because the lands belonged to Lady Lamont her intention was to insure that her lands would not be appraised in the future against her husband’s debts. Lady Lamont’s supplication was granted 16 February 1649 but with the condition that the “Act nowayes prejudices lawful Creditors of James Lamont”.<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>68</sup> N. Lamont, *An Inventory of Lamont Papers*, 203.

<sup>69</sup> N. Lamont, *An Inventory of Lamont Papers*, 204.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid.

<sup>72</sup> H. Campbell, (ed.), *Argyll Sasines: Particular Register, 1617-1675* (Edinburgh, 1933), 94-5; H. Campbell, (ed.), *Argyll Sasines: General Register, 1617-1670* (Edinburgh, 1934), 247.

<sup>73</sup> N. Lamont, *An Inventory of Lamont Papers*, 208.



The issue of indebtedness was not a problem confined to the lesser nobility; by the middle of the seventeenth century debt had become a non-discriminating epidemic that affected every level of society. Periods of financial crisis were even experienced by various cadet branches of the powerful Clan Campbell, including Campbell of Glenorchy. Although the Campbells of Glenorchy were residing primarily within Highland Perthshire, their financial difficulties are relevant to the Western Highlands and Isles because of the expanse of their territory and their subsequent involvement in the region. Aside from their possession of Breadalbane, the Campbells of Glenorchy retained possession of their original settlement at Kilchurn Castle on the northern end of Loch Awe in Glenorchy; by the mid sixteenth century, their estate stretched from Breadalbane in the east to Glenorchy and Nether Lorne in Argyll and the isles of Seil and Luing in the west.<sup>74</sup> Furthermore, the inclusion of the Campbells of Glenorchy illustrates the level of destruction carried out by the royalist army, especially by Alasdair MacColla and the Clan Donald. During the royalist military campaign of Montrose and MacColla, Glenorchy's estate was continually ravaged in Highland Perthshire and in Argyll. Therefore, the estate finances of Glenorchy are essential to developing a comprehensive assessment of the financial situation in the Western Highlands and Isles before, during, and after the Scottish Revolution.<sup>75</sup>

The financial crisis of the Campbells of Glenorchy was originally caused by extensive liferents issued to the wives of successive chiefs and a large number of inherited obligations. As a result the Lairds of Glenorchy were forced into deeper levels of borrowing from both inside and outside of their kin-group. To complicate matters the territorial devastation in the wake of the civil war so severely reduced their rental income that by 1652 Sir Robert Campbell, 9<sup>th</sup> Laird of Glenorchy, owed over £100,000 to his creditors.

The financial difficulties of the Campbells of Glenorchy began with the inability of Sir Colin Campbell of Glenorchy to promptly resolve the debts left to him on the death of Sir Duncan Campbell, 7<sup>th</sup> Laird of Glenorchy. According to the testament of Sir Duncan Campbell written in June 1631, his assets totaled 55,260

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<sup>74</sup> See Appendix 4: Clan Map with Civil War Allegiances

<sup>75</sup> Robert Dodgshon appears to have also thought Glenorchy a viable case study for his work on the economics of the Western Highlands and Isles; see Dodgshon, *From Chiefs to Landlords*.



merks of which 21,960 merks were in movable goods, 23,300 merks were in steelbow, and 10,000 merks were reported to be rents still outstanding from 1630. The liabilities listed in the testament appear to have outweighed Sir Duncan's assets with a total of 61,997 merks owed: 41,250 merks in obligations, 7,092 merks for servants' fees, and 12,405 merks for his legacy. The obligations ranged from 1,000 to 13,000 merks and were issued to eleven different creditors, nine of whom were kinsmen.<sup>76</sup> Therefore, on his death Sir Duncan left the Glenorchy estate with a budget deficit of 6,737 merks. Although the deficit was a small sum the assets included in Glenorchy's balance sheet included movable goods, such as gold cups and silver spoons, and steelbow which was grain and farming goods supplied to the tenants to work the land. In order to repay the debt left on the estate it would have been necessary to sell the movable goods and take back the steelbow, but to do so would have had a negative effect on the status of the estate and its rental income; the lavishness of the estate would be lost in selling its household goods and the tenants would be unable to farm the land in order to pay their rents. The only viable option for trying to lower the debt on the estate was to turn to the debt market, which helps to explain why Sir Duncan borrowed 41,250 merks when his assets, minus the outstanding rents for 1630, totaled 45,260 merks.

The problem faced by Sir Colin Campbell, 8<sup>th</sup> Laird of Glenorchy, on succeeding to the estate was the fact that one creditor, Sir Henry Wardlaw, Chamberlain to Queen Anne, had assigned his debts to another of Glenorchy's creditors, Sir Archibald Campbell, brother to the Laird of Lawers. The problem was not so much that he owed Archibald Campbell rather than Wardlaw; the problem was that the combined total now held by a single creditor was 12,000 merks. Faced with owing such a large sum to his kinsman, Sir Colin, in an effort to show good faith, issued a bond in 1638 to Sir Archibald acknowledging the assignation of Sir Henry Wardlaw.<sup>77</sup> It appears from a copy of Sir Colin's latterwill written three years before his death that he was unable to rectify his family's financial position in the short time he was Laird of Glenorchy. The latterwill written 4 May 1638

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<sup>76</sup> NAS, Breadalbane Muniments, GD112/1/488; GD112/26/5.

<sup>77</sup> *The Black Book of Taymouth*, 81.



showed that the sum of the obligations left outstanding by Sir Colin was 54,700 merks, constituting an increase of 13,450 merks over seven years.<sup>78</sup>

What is known of the financial condition of the Glenorchy estate on the death of Sir Colin in 1641 is deduced from the *Black Book of Taymouth* accounts of the debts left to Sir Robert Campbell, 9<sup>th</sup> Laird of Glenorchy, and his increased borrowing in 1643. According to the debts left to Sir Robert, Sir Colin left a total of 18,000 merks in obligations to Sir Archibald Campbell, thus increasing his inherited debt to his kinsman by 5,000 merks. The second largest obligation passed down by Sir Colin was for 22,000 merks in cautions for another kinsman, Patrick Campbell of Edinample. How Sir Archibald became creditor for both sums is unclear, but the *Black Book of Taymouth* records that Sir Robert now owed Sir Archibald the combined total of 40,000 merks. The fact that Sir Archibald was kin meant that Sir Robert was able to take advantage of family loyalty to resolve the debt. Whereas many creditors would have filed appraisings to denude Sir Robert of his estate, Sir Archibald allowed Sir Robert to make annual payments on the debt. The two agreed that Sir Robert would pay £8, or 12 merks, per 1,000 merks owed annually, equaling a yearly payment of 4,800 merks.<sup>79</sup>

The agreement reached between Sir Robert and Sir Archibald appeared to have reduced the financial problems of Sir Robert to a manageable level, 4,800 merks a year was easier to pay than a lump sum of 40,000 merks. However, Sir Robert's financial position in 1643 forced him deep into the debt market and led to borrowing from outside the clan. The reason for Sir Robert's renewed financial difficulties was due to his "being totallie exhaustit by paying the ladies of Glenurquhy ther yearly rents, and paying other creditouris".<sup>80</sup> The payments to the ladies were primarily annual stipends and liferents to the surviving widows of Sir Duncan and Sir Colin which, as Laird of Glenorchy, Sir Robert was obligated to pay. Consequently, Sir Robert turned to the debt market and borrowed 67,303 merks from non-kinsmen in 1643. The accounts of Sir Robert show that he borrowed £20,000 from Sir Charles Erskine of Cambuskenneth, 20,000 merks from Mr. Roger Mowatt, advocate in Edinburgh, 8,000 merks from Captain John Short,

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<sup>78</sup> NAS, Breadalbane Muniments, GD112/26/13.

<sup>79</sup> *The Black Book of Taymouth*, 95.

<sup>80</sup> *The Black Book of Taymouth*, 96.



provost of Stirling, 5,000 merks from Patrick Hepburn of Willyes, apothecary in Edinburgh, and 4,000 merks from Hew McCorquodill of Phantilands.<sup>81</sup> Unfortunately, borrowing outside the kin group put Sir Robert in a precarious position because, unlike his dealings with Sir Archibald, he could not rely on family loyalty to save his estate from apprising.

Shortly after Sir Robert issued these obligations the royalist campaign gained momentum and between 1644 and 1645 the Glenorchy estate suffered severe devastation to the estimated total of 1,200,000 merks presumably resulting from the burning of crops, the slaughter or stealing of livestock, and structural damage. The combination of the debts owed against the Glenorchy estate and the extreme destruction of the lands increased the overall deficit of the estate in excess of 400,000 merks in 1648.<sup>82</sup> The insolvency of Sir Robert's finances led to a series of apprisings being filed in December 1648 by his chief creditors and the widows of Sir Duncan and Sir Colin of Glenorchy. The first apprising filed against Sir Robert was by John Campbell, Earl of Loudoun, as assignee to Dame Juliane Campbell, widow of Sir Colin, 8<sup>th</sup> Laird of Glenorchy. According to the apprising, Sir Robert owed Dame Juliane Campbell £40,000 in principal plus an undisclosed amount in penalties for her yearly duties owed for 1644-1648. Therefore, the Earl of Loudoun "did compryse the laird of Glenurquhay his whole easteatt, and arestit his whole dewties for these soumes forsaid".<sup>83</sup> The second apprising raised against Sir Robert was by Dame Elizabeth Sinclair, widow of Sir Duncan, 7<sup>th</sup> Laird of Glenorchy, for her annual fees and related penalties.<sup>84</sup> The *Black Book of Taymouth* does not record the sum owed but it can be assumed that her fees would be roughly the same as those due to Dame Juliane as the widow of a former laird. Although it is surprising that the widows of the previous lairds filed apprisings against Sir Robert it is understandable. It cannot be assumed that the apprisings were raised because there was no family loyalty, rather the important fact is that the women's income rested on the financial support which Sir Robert was obligated to pay. Where it can be said that family loyalty was of no use to Sir Robert is in the apprisings raised by those he

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<sup>81</sup> *The Black Book of Taymouth*, 96; D. Watt, "Chiefs, Lawyers, and Debt", 224.

<sup>82</sup> D. Watt, "Chiefs, Lawyers, and Debt", 224.

<sup>83</sup> *The Black Book of Taymouth*, 105.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*



borrowed from in 1643 who were outside the kin group. In December 1648 appraisings were raised by three of Sir Robert's chief creditors: Erskine, Mowatt, and Short. As indicated by the appraisings, Sir Robert still owed the original principal plus "annuals and penalties" which he borrowed five years previously: Sir Charles Erskine's appraising was for £20,000, Mr. Roger Mowatt's was 20,000 merks, and Captain John Short's was for 8,000 merks.<sup>85</sup>

In the aftermath of the royalist campaign the average rental income on the Glenorchy estate was roughly 2,800 merks.<sup>86</sup> This dramatic decrease in revenue not only led to the 1648 appraisings being raised against the estate but also drove Sir Robert deeper into the debt market. "Ane compt of Glenorchy's debts" calculated in September 1652 provides a detailed account of all outstanding debts owed with the applicable interest. Seven years after the royalist campaign and ensuing ruin of the estate the amount of debt was still overwhelming, comprising seventeen creditors for a total balance of £101,608 6s 8d, ranging from £666 13s 4d to £28,333 6s 8d. Not only is the level of debt astonishing but also the fact that of the seventeen creditors six were those who Sir Robert borrowed from in 1643 or who raised appraisings against him in 1648, thus, representing the bulk of the figure owed. According to the calculation of Glenorchy's debt he owed Patrick Hepburn, apothecary, £3,333 6s 8d plus £1,316 13s 4d interest, Dame Elizabeth Sinclair, £22,000 plus £3,840 interest, John Short, provost of Stirling, £5,333 6s 8d plus £3,240, Sir Charles Erskine £28,333 6s 8d, and Mr. Roger Mowat, advocate, £18,666 13s 4d plus £11,280 interest on the total owed to Erskine and Mowat.<sup>87</sup> Thus, Sir Robert owed his previous creditors seventy-five percent of his total debt in 1652 and again put himself in a dangerous financial position. It would not be until Sir John Campbell succeeded Sir Robert in 1657 that the fortunes of the Glenorchy family would improve. Through careful and crafty management on the part of Sir John the rental income on his lands would increase to 16,000 merks,<sup>88</sup> putting Glenorchy on the path to financial recovery.

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<sup>85</sup> *The Black Book of Taymouth*, 106.

<sup>86</sup> D. Watt, "Chiefs, Lawyers, and Debt", 224.

<sup>87</sup> NAS, Breadalbane Muniments, GD112/38/3/3.

<sup>88</sup> D. Watt, "Chiefs, Lawyers, Debt", 225.



The financial details of the Captain of Clanranald, Lamont of Lamont, and Campbell of Glenorchy illustrate the evolution of indebtedness and the ease with which one could enter the debt market. The problem faced by all three families was the difficulty in pulling out of the debt market because, once in the market, it proved extremely hard to break the cycle of borrowing. The financial ramifications of the annual meetings and the civil war forced Clanranald, Lamont, and Glenorchy deep into the debt market.

Although laws were passed regulating interest rates and for protecting creditors, no laws were enacted which would protect the debtor from getting himself in a financial crisis. As long as the chief was able to find a willing creditor there was no limit as to how much debt he could burden his estate with. As seen in the transactions of Sir James Lamont of Lamont, the amount of debt accrued drastically outweighed the value of his estate and he continued to borrow until his creditors were eventually compelled to apprise his estate. In some cases, such as the Campbells of Cawdor, the only option available for preventing the ultimate ruin of the family was for the “friends and family” to restrain their chief’s spending and take control of the family finances. In an attempt to defray the debts on the Campbell of Cawdor estate a meeting was held sometime between 1620 and 1622 of those loyal to Cawdor during which they established an administration to manage the estate and placed control of the family finances in the hands of a group of chamberlains and auditors.<sup>89</sup> Had the family not intervened Cawdor would have most likely followed the same path as Sir James Lamont and have been completely denuded of his lands.

Overall, the advent of the debt market when used in moderation could have been an asset to the chiefs and allowed them to expand or maintain their clan’s socio-economic status. Unfortunately, the ease with which they could borrow money led to an abuse of the system. By entering the debt market at the levels which Clanranald, Lamont and Glenorchy did, it became necessary for them to continue borrowing in order to pay other debts; in essence they eventually had to start robbing Peter to pay Paul and set in motion a downward spiral into severe indebtedness resulting in more clans living on credit than being financially liquid.

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<sup>89</sup> *The Book of the Thanes of Cawdor*, 254.



Therefore, the advent and expansion of the debt market in the Western Highlands and Isles allowed clans to put themselves in a precarious financial position by the outbreak of the Civil Wars. By aligning with one faction or the other the clans were able to alter their socio-economic position in the region at the expense of their rivals, thanks in part to the economic consequences of war, primarily the loss and acquisition of resources through pillage and destruction of property. As a result, the opportunities afforded to the clans in the Western Highlands and Isles to rectify their financial problems through their involvement in the conflict had a direct impact on their chosen allegiances.



## **Chapter 7**

### **Western Highland and Isles Allegiances**

The examination of the clans of the Western Highlands and Isles' motives for aligning with the Covenanters and royalists indicates that local politics and personal agendas, such as long-standing clan rivalries, self-preservation and territorial expansion, played a larger role in their allegiances than the traditional platforms of the two factions. The purpose of studying the allegiances during this period is to provide a better understanding of the instability of the Western Highlands and Isles and the resulting threat it posed to the outcome of the Scottish Revolution and subsequent Wars of the Three Kingdoms. This chapter will attempt to define the motives of various clan allegiances throughout the Scottish Revolution. What will emerge is the fact that none of the motives found among the clans were mutually exclusive, there was always an interconnection between them; however, by detailing the actions taken by the clans it can be seen that there were some issues that were given more weight than others.

The Covenant Movement began as a revolt of the nobility and Protestant ministers against the policies of Charles I. The complaints against Charles were aimed at the religious innovations he introduced to the Church of Scotland and the power structure within the government. As the revolt escalated it divided Scotland in two by the summer of 1638, engulfing every social class from nobility to peasant. The motives behind the Covenanting faction within the Western Highlands and Isles can be classified into three categories: opposition to Charles I's policies, existing alliances and rivalries, and territorial expansion. Through these motives the cause of the Covenanters was propagated in a region previously removed from the issues of government due to the impact that these motives had on the locality.

Royalist support during the Scottish Revolution developed in response to the rise of the Covenanting Movement. As an adversarial faction, the royalists' platform was obviously the support of both Charles I and his authority. An examination of the royalists' motives provides an explanation as to why the Covenanters dominated Scotland between 1637 and 1644. Prior to 1644, the motives behind the royalist allegiances were support of the king's authority and for



religious reasons, neither of which had a large following in the Western Highlands and Isles. However, the introduction of the revenge mentality among clans in the region provided the royalists with an advantage over the Covenanters. The addition of the MacDonald regiments, the vendetta Alasdair MacColla and the Clan Donald pursued against the Clan Campbell, and the connections Clan MacKay maintained with Christian IV of Denmark aided the military endeavors of the Marquis of Montrose, which resulted in the victories of the royalists between 1644 and 1645. The fact that the royalists' victories ended in 1645 was greatly due to the departure of MacColla and his regiments further proving that, although support for Charles was key to the overall royalist cause, the rivalry between clans and the opportunity for revenge were significant components of the royalists' success and that local politics in many cases influenced the Western Highlands and Isles' involvement in national politics.

One of the difficulties in understanding allegiances to the Covenanters and royalists is the added component of clans who shifted their allegiance from one faction to the other and in some cases back again. A number of clans in the Western Highlands and Isles shifted their support in an attempt to align themselves with whichever faction had the upper hand at the moment; thus the study of these clans adds a "wildcard" element to allegiances in the region because their loyalty was undependable. Within this category we can include those who were provoked to change their allegiance as their reaction to a particular event was motivated by self-preservation. The fluctuating careers of Sir James Lamont of Lamont, Sir Lachlan MacLean of Duart, and George MacKenzie, 2<sup>nd</sup> Earl of Seaforth, illustrate the difficulty in categorizing the clans of the region and determining their motives. However, the careers of all three men can ultimately be classified as a desire to safely navigate their clan through the Scottish Revolution; the motive behind their allegiances was primarily the threat of retaliation either directed at them or that they could direct towards another, and was conducted to safeguard the family's status. Due to this survivalist mentality, few clans could unequivocally be classified as Covenanter or royalist, making it difficult at times to determine whom the two factions could rely on for assistance.



The study of allegiance formation is essentially an exercise in political psychology, analyzing an individual's reasons for siding with a particular faction. The difficulty in conducting such a study for the Western Highlands and Isles is the lack of personal writings that verbalize the clans' ideology and motives. The motives discussed here are based on the evident connection between various clans' histories and their subsequent military and governmental involvement, supplemented when available by letters and bands of union. Therefore, the methodology used to conduct this study was a multi-step process.

The first step was to determine the actual allegiance. A useful tool for determining the divisions within the Western Highlands and Isles is found in Allan Macinnes's work *Clanship, Commerce and the House of Stuart 1603-1788* in which Professor Macinnes includes a clan map in his appendix illustrating the allegiances during the "Civil War 1644-47". Although this map proved a useful starting point for an in-depth study of the region, there is limited discussion of the motives that facilitated the creation of such a map. Therefore, once the allegiance was confirmed, the second step was to go chronologically through the clan history to determine the motives behind the clan's allegiance. In most cases this exercise provided significant insight into the alliances and rivalries that were already in existence prior to the outbreak of the Scottish Revolution and shed considerable light on the choices and actions made by the clans. In the case of Donald MacKay, Lord Reay, the analysis of the clan's history points to the clan's long-standing opposition to the Covenanting Earl of Sutherland's territorial ambitions aimed at gaining control of Strathnaver, the seat of Clan MacKay, as the reasoning behind Clan MacKay's allegiance to the royalist cause.

Often a third step was needed to determine if a clan's loyalty shifted from one faction to another and why this occurred. By incorporating the general history of the conflict, especially the military history, it could be deduced that in most cases a deviation was caused by a threat or bribe from the Marquis of Montrose, as the royalists' representative, or from the Marquis of Argyll, as the Covenanters' agent. This step was vital in understanding when and why a number of chieftains broke away from the Covenant regime to join the royalists, and for some why they returned to the ranks of the Covenanters. A prime example of this fluctuation of



support is the mass exodus of chieftains from the Covenanting ranks in response to threats to property and person made by Montrose after the royalists' victory at Inverlochy in 1645. Although the prime shift in allegiance was in direct relation to the outcome of Inverlochy, men such as George MacKenzie, 2<sup>nd</sup> Earl of Seaforth, realigned with the Covenant regime after the defeat of Montrose at the battle of Philiphaugh.

Overall, the motives of allegiance in the Western Highlands and Isles resemble the motives of the English and Lowland Scots during the Civil War. The English model of allegiances, developed by John Morrill, is evident in both the Lowlands and Highlands and consists of four motivational categories: religion, politics, self-preservation or advancement, and indifference.<sup>1</sup> The religious rationale in both England and Scotland was based on a fear of popery at one end of the spectrum and a fear of religious anarchy that would come about through the destruction of the current religious hierarchy at the other; while the political motive was based on support for an absolute monarchy or for a constitutional monarchy, a monarch answerable to Parliament. Both the Parliamentarians in England and the Covenanters in Scotland feared popery and called for the leadership of central government to be placed in the hands of parliament rather than the monarch; while the Loyalists in England and the royalists in Scotland feared religious anarchy and supported the decisions and powers of Charles I. Although the issues of religion and politics can be applied in varying degrees to the Western Highlands and Isles, the self-preservation and advancement mentality found throughout England and Scotland was to have a greater prevalence in the Western Highlands and Isles and played a significant role in both forming and changing allegiances.

Another commonality between the English and the Lowland and Highland Scots was the number of men who were indifferent to the situation. The reasoning behind this position was the belief that the local magnate or feudal superior had a better understanding of the situation, thus the lesser would follow the leader. In examining the actions of various clans one rarely finds a chief acting on his own and going against the direction of his clan or local magnate. This is clearly seen in Clan Chisholm's support of the Covenanters. Being a lesser clan, the Chisholms followed

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<sup>1</sup> Morrill, *The Nature of the English Revolution*, 188-9.



the lead of their strong neighbor, the Frasers of Lovat. Yet, this is where the similarities between English, Lowland, and Highland end because the Highlanders had one more motive indigenous to the Western Highlands and Isles—bloodthirsty revenge. Although there were feuds between families in England and Lowland Scotland, their desire for revenge was not as significant nor as violent as those found among their Highland counterparts. When the animosity between rival clans, especially towards the Clan Campbell, is added to the equation, a number of battles during the Scottish Revolution became outright massacres and facilitated the continuation of bloodfeuds that originated in the late 1500s.

Although this chapter examines the four core motives of allegiances in the Western Highlands and Isles they were not mutually exclusive. Rather, the following examination of various clans is used to highlight how the different motives could manifest into allegiance formation. The available evidence does however point toward the largest influence behind their allegiance but they were by no means pigeonholed by their beliefs or circumstances. Obviously, there could be more than one reason to align with a particular faction or even motives that caused a conflict when trying to decide the appropriate course of action for the clan, but when the history of the clan is compiled from the numerous sources there are indications that there was a particular issue at the heart of the matter that took precedence over others. As a result, situations arise where a clan, such as the Clan Donald, aligned with the royalists due to the potential for self-advancement over the Campbells, which also had an indirect relationship to their religious preference. The religious connotation behind the MacDonalds' allegiance was an added incentive but not the principal reason for their animosity and vengeance toward the Clan Campbell. The Clan Donald could have argued on ideological grounds that religion was the deciding factor behind their allegiance; however, actions speak louder than words and when the destruction of Campbell territory and the murdering of thousands of Campbells is put in the context of the long and violent history between the two clans what emerges is the Clan Donald's desire to regain their ancestral lands and destroy the House of Argyll.



## I

The influence of the Lowlands combined with connections at court among the magnates in the Western Highlands and Isles, such as the Marquis of Argyll and the Earl of Sutherland, gave rise to the acceptance of the ideology behind the National Covenant, opposition to Charles I's government and his religious innovations. Like the Lowlanders, the magnates in the Highlands who were opposed to the Act of Revocation were angered by the threat of the restoration of church lands to the prelates and their increasing control over the government. Therefore, both the Lowland and Highland Covenanters called for the withdrawal of prelates from religious offices, but, more importantly, from secular positions. The fear among the lords was that if the bishops of Charles I and Archbishop Laud's choosing held office they would be used as instruments of direct rule from London, thus, the Scots Lords would no longer have a voice in their own government.<sup>2</sup> In order to give more power to the prelates appointed from London Charles removed some of the powers of the Scots by compulsory forfeiture of heritable offices and jurisdictions. For both Argyll and Sutherland the prospect of losing land to the prelates and the potential for a decline in their position in government made the earls extremely wary of their tentative dominance in their locality that could very well be undermined by Charles's new policies.

Therefore, religion was an underlying factor in adherence to the Covenant regime and merely served to magnify the situation, the main aspect being a fear of increased power of the bishops that would result in the lords' loss of control. Furthermore, the influence of the Lowlands on the nobility of the Western Highlands and Isles did manifest itself as a devout adherence to Protestantism among some chiefs in the region even though the majority of the population who were not in contact with the Lowlands lacked a strong religious foundation. Those lords who bordered the Lowlands or had business that regularly took them south tended to have a greater exposure to the "true" religion. This link between the Lowlands and Highlands resulted in a number of Lords opposing Charles I's Episcopalian

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<sup>2</sup> D. Mathew, *Scotland under Charles I* (London, 1955), 256-7.



innovations within the Church of Scotland, and primarily his alterations to the governmental structure.

The political power gained through adherence to the “true” religion and support of the Covenant regime is seen in the career of James Grant of Freuchie and his numerous appointments within the Covenanting government. Grant, 7<sup>th</sup> Laird of Freuchie, was one whose Covenant support was founded on his religious conviction and adherence to Protestantism. James Grant can be classified as one who opposed Charles’s policies and stood by his religious convictions in the face of family opposition. Grant was one of the most active lesser nobles within the Covenanting ranks, holding appointments as commissioner for the County of Elgin in August 1643, as well as to the Committee of War for Elgin, Nairn and portions of Inverness-shire in August 1643 and July 1644. In 1643, Grant also accepted the commission of Lieutenant Colonel of the Covenant Army under Colonel Murray and raised 1,000 men to join Murray at Elgin.<sup>3</sup> However, out of fear of retribution, Grant temporarily joined the royalist faction after Montrose’s victory at Inverlochy sending 300 men to join Montrose. Although this would appear to be a shift in Grant’s allegiance it cannot wholly be deemed as such due to the smallness of the number of men he sent to Montrose and the fact that Grant himself did not attend. Once the tides turned back in the Covenanters’ favor Grant realigned himself with the Covenanters and his convictions.

One indication that Grant was sincere in his support of the Covenant is that he busied himself with gaining signatures to the National Covenant and raising troops in Grant country, even though close family members were in opposition. In 1638, Grant approached his mother, Lady Grant, who was living off her life-rents at Castle Urquhart on Loch Ness, to get permission to campaign on her lands for the Covenant. As a result of Lady Grant’s opposition to the Covenant regime, she refused to put in writing her permission to gather signatures to the National Covenant. Furthermore, Lady Grant refused to allow her son to levy troops in her territory, unless he came with the authority and instructions directly from the Committee of Estates.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> W. Fraser, ed., *The Chiefs of Grant* 2 vols (Edinburgh, 1883), i, 254 & 256.

<sup>4</sup> Fraser, ed., *The Chiefs of Grant*, i, 253.



A second sign that Grant was devout in his convictions and loyal to the Covenant in spite of his family is seen in three letters from family members that pleaded with the laird to join the royalists. Two of the letters are from his uncle the Earl of Tullibardine, and the third is from his brother-in-law, Sir Walter Innes of Balvenie; both men had joined the royalist party and feared the consequences Grant would face if he did not do the same. The first letter from Tullibardine, dated 25 July 1638, warned Grant of the dangers of siding against the King stating, "My cownsell to you in this trublesum tyme [is] that you mey haue a speciell caire not to schowe your self against the Kings Majestie your sowerene".<sup>5</sup> However, Grant disregarded this and other letters, prompting Tullibardine to send a final letter on 8 June 1639 to plead one last time for his nephew to align himself with the crown. In this final letter Tullibardine complained of not hearing from Grant since the "troubles" began and advised Grant to "schowe this letter to your grandonkls, and adwyse spedelie with them and with the best affected of your friends that loueis the standing of your hous, and be not careyed awaye as you hawe beine with a traitor to his Majestie and to your house".<sup>6</sup> The third letter that still survives is from Sir Walter Innes of Balvenie, and is of a more ominous tone than those of Tullibardine. On 11 March 1639, Sir Walter wrote:

Quhat danger may be in keeping such meitingis, I leawe to yourself to judge of, and can not bot, owt of my lowe, advertise yow to bewar...Now, brother, let me intreat yow to be wyse in tym, and lose not se faire hoopis of the greatest hounour and good that evir ye sall attaine to; quhich iff ye doe, as ye sall lose all your trewest frendis, and procure yourself too michtie enemies, so it fears me it salbe the ruine and overthrow of that hows that he descended to yow from your worthie ancestoris.<sup>7</sup>

Although Sir Walter warned Grant that his house would be in danger if he persisted in his course against the king, it is clear that again Grant ignored the advice and followed his convictions. By 1643 James Grant had become one of the leaders of the Covenant Movement in the north.

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<sup>5</sup> Fraser, ed., *The Chiefs of Grant*, ii, 64.

<sup>6</sup> Fraser, ed., *The Chiefs of Grant*, ii, 68.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.



A second clan that adhered to the traditional Covenant platform was John MacLeod of Dunvegan. MacLeod, 16<sup>th</sup> chief of MacLeod, held numerous offices in the Covenant government as a result of his family's long-standing support of the Protestant religion and was one of the rare Highlanders who supported the Covenant in spite of the local rivalries on the Isle of Skye. MacLeod first appears in support of the Covenant regime in October 1637 when he added his signature to the Supplication. As the precursor to the National Covenant, the Supplication was signed by Lowland commissioners with the addition of five signatures on the back, including MacLeod, stating "we underscribers assents and adheres to the within written parchment".<sup>8</sup> MacLeod's signature to the document shows considerable independence and a strong conviction, because none of his neighbors, who included MacDonald of Sleat, were in support of the Covenanters.<sup>9</sup> The Synod of Argyll complained on several occasions about the inhabitants of Skye being indifferent and unwilling to sign the Covenant, which proves that MacLeod's support of the Covenant was in spite of his neighbors. Furthermore, subscription to the Supplication was completely voluntary which indicates he supported the cause without the need of persuasion. Although MacLeod's signature does not appear on any surviving copies of the National Covenant, it is most probable that he signed given the fact he signed the precursor and later held offices within the Covenant regime.

John MacLeod's involvement in the Covenanters' government began with his election to Parliament in 1639. MacLeod sat as one of the two commissioners to Parliament for Inverness-shire, at which time the new regime ratified all the acts proposed by the General Assembly including the abolition of the Lords of Articles and the act that made subscription to the National Covenant compulsory. Although MacLeod was elected again in 1641 he is mentioned only once during the proceedings when he stood caution for Glengarry against charges of raiding brought

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<sup>8</sup> I.F. Grant, *The MacLeods: The History of a Clan, 1200-1956* (London, 1959), 276.

<sup>9</sup> After the death of Donald Gorme MacDonald of Sleat, his son and heir James MacDonald opted to remain neutral even though the clan elite were in support of the royalists. This resulted in a partial schism within the clan culminating in James allowing his men to join other branches of the Clan Donald regiments but James himself not taking an active part.



forward by Sir Lachlan MacKintosh.<sup>10</sup> Between 1641 and 1646, MacLeod was more involved in the Covenant government at the local level serving on the committee for the sherifffdom of Argyll in 1643 and 1644, as well as tax collector for the Isles and Inverness in 1643. It was not until 1646 that MacLeod became militarily involved in the conflict when he was appointed to the Committee of War for Inverness-shire, and, along with his brother Rory, was named chief officer in command of the Covenanters' garrison in Inverness.<sup>11</sup>

Aside from John MacLeod's long list of office holdings in the Covenant faction, further evidence of his support of the cause is seen in his petition to the Committee of Estates in 1649. MacLeod submitted a petition to the Estates in response to threats of legal actions against him by the local tax collector. MacLeod claimed he was unable to pay his taxes not out of any hostility to the government, but, since the "Irish Rebels" landed, his lands had been wasted and in the past five years he had not received the equivalent of one year's rent. Because of MacLeod's service to the regime and his "notorious suffering", the Estates granted him a tax exemption.<sup>12</sup>

On the whole, religious affiliation in the Western Highlands and Isles was a greater factor in supporting the Covenant than in opposing it which limited the scope with which religion affected the allegiances in the region. Protestantism was able to maintain a limited hold in Argyllshire, Sutherland, and Caithness as a result of the strength of the local earls and their connections to the Lowlands and to court. However, most of the Western Highlands and Isles lacked a strong and organized religious institution which resulted in a number of inhabitants being religious but devoid of regular services due to the failure of both the Church of Scotland and the Irish Franciscans to provide a preaching ministry.<sup>13</sup> The fact that many inhabitants did not benefit from regular church services meant that the innovations which the Covenanters were opposed to had little bearing on the religious beliefs of the populace and, therefore, played a lesser role in their allegiances.

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<sup>10</sup> Grant, *The MacLeods*, 283. See chapter 3 "Central Government and the Western Highlands and Isles" for details of the suit filed by Mackintosh against Glengarry on 27 August 1641.

<sup>11</sup> *RPC*, 2<sup>nd</sup> series, vi, 623.

<sup>12</sup> *APS*, vi, II, 355.

<sup>13</sup> See chapter 4, "Religion from Reformation to War".



## II

Conquest in the name of religion was an age-old practice that all of early modern Europe was familiar with. The emergence of the Covenant Movement provided the opportunity for many clans to expand their territory and authority. During the Scottish Revolution, one of the most common ways to gain territory was to acquire commissions from the Covenanting regime against the inhabitants of the desired property. Therefore, the impact that economics had on allegiances was that it instigated many to act nationally in an attempt to improve their position in the locality because more territory equaled more power for the clan and chief in the form of increased revenues and greater mustering capabilities. This resulted in local and national interests existing simultaneously, but with greater importance being placed on the locality. An expert in this practice was the Marquis of Argyll, especially in regards to his acquiring commissions to justify his actions as seen in his commission against the clans in Atholl and surrounding areas. It must be noted that Argyll was a devout Protestant, however it must be equally noted that he used his position within the Covenant regime to expand his clan's territory. The fact that Argyll acted nationally as a result of the effect it would have on the locality meant that the interests of the Covenanters and of Argyll intersected, but in looking at the chronology of Argyll's actions in Atholl it is evident that he was placing his interests first and the regime's second.

On 12 June 1640 the Committee of Estates issued a commission of "fire and sword" to the Marquis of Argyll against royalists in the Central Highlands. The commission declared that those named proved enemies to the country and religion and were either awaiting an opportunity to attack the Covenanters or join in an invasion from abroad. Those named as enemies of the state included the Earl of Atholl, Lord Ogilvie, and their accomplices in Atholl and the Braes of Angus, the entire Farquharson clan and their accomplices in the Braes of Mar, and other known royalists in Badenoch, Lochaber and Rannoch. Issuance of the commission authorized Argyll to pursue the above-mentioned with "fire and sword" until they



were either destroyed or gave assurance for their future good conduct.<sup>14</sup> With this authority Argyll was able to combine his public and private interests, suppression of the royalists' faction in the area and the extension of his own and his clan's power.

The suppression of royalists in the central Highlands was of particular concern to Argyll due to the strength of the Earl of Atholl and the threat he posed to branches of Clan Campbell. In May 1640 a letter from Lord Ogilvie, son of the Earl of Airlie, who had fled to England at the outbreak of the "troubles", indicated that the royalists were organizing a rising in the central Highlands and that the Earl of Atholl had promised his assistance.<sup>15</sup> Although, the Earl of Atholl had not openly opposed the Covenant, he was rebuked numerous times by the Committee of Estates for disobeying orders to muster men for the Covenanting Army. The combination of the intercepted letter and the Earl of Atholl's suspicious behavior prompted the Marquis of Argyll to warn his kinsmen of the Stewarts and other "Athollmen" and advised them to prepare for a rising in the region.

While Argyll was preparing for a rising in Atholl he also announced his intentions to take possession of Badenoch and Lochaber on the pretence of the inhabitants' royalist activities. In actuality, Argyll was intent on seizing property of the nearly bankrupt Marquis of Huntly. Huntly and Argyll had previously entered into a financial agreement in which Argyll had become cautioner for a portion of Huntly's debts, as well as for the dowries of his daughters. It was agreed that should Huntly default on his debts Argyll would take possession of the lands and lordships of Badenoch and Lochaber as compensation.<sup>16</sup> In order to lay claim to the lands and to weaken royalist strength in the region, Argyll paid Huntly's debt before it became necessary and in May 1640 declared Huntly's lands forfeit.

Edward J. Cowan states early on in *Montrose: For Covenant and King* "the 'Anti-Campbell coalition' was largely the creation of Hamilton during the summer of 1638 has been overlooked" and that Hamilton was the one "who hit upon the idea of exploiting the widespread antipathy towards Sliochd Diarmaid".<sup>17</sup> Granted, it was Hamilton who joined the clans in opposition to the Covenant and thus Argyll,

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<sup>14</sup> HMC, Report IV, MSS of Earl of Argyll, 491-2.

<sup>15</sup> D. Stevenson, *The Scottish Revolution 1637-44: The Triumph of the Covenanters* (Newton Abbot, 1973), 198.

<sup>16</sup> Macinnes, *Clanship, Commerce and the House of Stuart*, 97.

<sup>17</sup> Cowan, *Montrose*, 50.

however it was Argyll's actions which created the Anti-Campbell sentiment allowing Hamilton to merely provide a banner for the clans to unite under. Unfortunately for Argyll he perpetuated the animosity towards his house by his actions during the Bishops' Wars and did little to rectify the hostile situation he himself had created. Argyll's commission against the men of Atholl was intended to bolster the Covenanters' cause and remove the royalist threat in the central highlands but Montrose had already secured Airlie Castle for the Covenanters and entrusted it to Lt. Col. Sibbald. Rather than being satisfied with the castle being in Covenanter possession, Argyll still marched his men through the region creating £7,000 worth of damage. In fact, Cowan quotes an order from Argyll to Campbell of Inverawe found in the *Argyll Transcripts* in which Argyll instructs his kinsman to destroy the castle of Forthar or Forter, "'ye shall fyre it weill, that so it may be destroyed. Bot ye neid not to lett know that ye have directions from me to fyre it".<sup>18</sup> Why would Argyll be giving orders which he did not want anyone to know were coming from him if he was doing it solely for the cause of the Covenant? The secrecy and manipulation implicit in this quote when combined with his other actions during the course of events appears to paint an unflattering picture of Argyll in which his personal ambitions played a key role in his decision-making.

Apparently, Argyll was preparing for a military expedition into Atholl and the surrounding areas to assert his claim to Huntly's land and to prevent a royalist rising in the central Highlands at least a month prior to his commission. Argyll's acquisition of a commission of "fire and sword" merely served to legitimize his expedition. The fact that Huntly and the Athollmen were royalists meant that Argyll was able to use his affiliation with the Covenanting Movement to not only rid the regime of the threat of a royalist rising but also to gain personally from the endeavor by acquiring Huntly's territory. Therefore, the commission against the Athollmen allowed Argyll to use his public position within the Covenanting regime for his private gain.<sup>19</sup> However, the fact that he was acting prior to his national commission indicates the motives behind his actions were primarily the expansion of his power

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<sup>18</sup> As quoted in Cowan, *Montrose*, 96. Original is found in *Argyll Transcripts*, July 1640.

<sup>19</sup> Stevenson, *The Scottish Revolution 1637-44*, 198-99; Macinnes, *Clanship, Commerce and the House of Stuart*, 97; J.P. Kenyon & J. Ohlmeyer, "Background to the Civil Wars" in Kenyon & Ohlmeyer, eds., *The Civil Wars: A Military History of England, Scotland, and Ireland 1638-1660* (Oxford, 1998), 23-4.



and territory and subsequently the Covenanters' need to thwart the royalists in the Central Highlands.

The issue of economic indebtedness among the clans also became a factor in their allegiance. The advent of the debt market in the mid-seventeenth century allowed many chiefs to extend their resources beyond their means. Whereas indebtedness among nobles in the Lowlands led some to align with the Covenant,<sup>20</sup> the financial crisis experienced by the chiefs in the Western Highlands and Isles led some to support the royalists or to shift their allegiances. This difference was primarily due to the control the Clan Campbell had over the debt market in the region; principally through the Marquis of Argyll and George Campbell, sheriff of Argyll, who were the holders of many of the debts in the region, and in some cases took on the role of debt consolidators. It was hoped by those clans faced with financial insolvency that a royalist victory would result in the destruction of the Campbells, thus removing the financial control the Campbells wielded over the clans they were creditors of, and would allow for the reacquisition of territory lost due to their debts.

The Clan Lamont is a prime example of a clan that shifted its allegiance because of its economic situation. Historians have labeled Sir James Lamont of Lamont as an adventurer and self-seeker, which appear to be accurate terms to describe his actions during the Scottish Revolution.<sup>21</sup> As a result of Sir James's financial situation his allegiance was based solely on his desire to advance his clan's position by gaining the district of Cowal in Argyllshire. This goal resulted in Clan Lamont vacillating between the Covenanters and royalists, as well as Sir James's "double-dealing" at times. Sir James was viewed by the Covenanters, especially the Campbells, as an "unscrupulous turn-coat" who "in all things played for his own hand" because he had first supported the Covenant regime, but switched loyalties to the royalists when Montrose and the Irish regiments were in the midst of a series of military victories; thus bettering his odds for self-preservation and possible

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<sup>20</sup> For more on this argument see K. Brown, "Aristocratic Finances and the Origins of the Scottish Revolution", *English Historical Review* 104 (1989), 46-87.

<sup>21</sup> E Furgol, "The Civil Wars in Scotland", in P. Kenyon & J. Ohlmeyer, eds., *The Civil Wars: A Military History of England, Scotland and Ireland, 1638-1660* (Oxford, 1998), 62.

advancement.<sup>22</sup> However, Lamont's maneuverings failed; by the end of the Scottish Revolution, Sir James had effectively been deemed bankrupt and this resulted in the seizure of a vast amount of Lamont territory by his creditors in 1648, including George Campbell, sheriff of Argyll.<sup>23</sup>

The reason behind Sir James Lamont's shift in allegiance was simply because by siding with the dominant faction he would be better able to strengthen his claim to Cowal. The fact he changed allegiances due to his waning power in Cowal is seen in his one condition for supporting the royalist regime. Sir James agreed to align with the royalists as long as his colors were unfurled at Cowal by an Irish force, large enough to ensure subjection of the inhabitants.<sup>24</sup> The Irish regiments had already gained a reputation for being fierce fighters, and by having the Irish raise Lamont's colors at Cowal the intention was to visually link Lamont to the Irish forces. This intimidation factor was not something the Covenanters could offer Lamont at the time; thus he aligned with the side that could best aid his own agenda. Not surprisingly, however, as a royalist, Lamont did not rally his forces around the Marquis of Montrose or Alasdair MacColla; instead he pursued his own feuds in Argyllshire against the Campbells and continued in his pursuit of Cowal.

As with religion, the effect economics had on allegiances was a direct result of the impact it would have on local politics. The economic advantages afforded to the various clans in the Western Highlands and Isles magnified the political situation within the locality because of the potential to disrupt the current political structure. As seen in the Marquis of Argyll's commission against the "Athollmen", Clan Campbell was able to increase its power and territory through its allegiance to the Covenant, while Clan Lamont's indebtedness resulted in calculated shifts in allegiance that enabled the clan to temporarily regain their dominance in the district of Cowal. Clearly, the economic possibilities that could increase a clan's power were a key aspect behind allegiances in the Western Highlands and Isles due to relationship between economics and local political status.

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<sup>22</sup> As quoted in H. McKechnie, *The Lamont Clan, 1235-1935* (Edinburgh, 1938), 148.

<sup>23</sup> For details of the Clan Lamont's debt see chapter 4 "Indebtedness in the Western Highlands and Isles" and Sir Norman Lamont of Knockdow, *An Inventory of Lamont Papers, 1231-1897* (Edinburgh, 1914), 181-208.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.



### III

Looking at a map of the Western Highlands and Isles illustrating the support of the clans for the Covenanters and royalists it is clear that a majority of the allegiances were drawn along the same lines as the long-standing alliances and rivalries between neighboring clans.<sup>25</sup> Many of the allegiances that were founded on existing alliances often resulted in the lesser clan following the lead of their superior out of both fears of the consequences if they did not and the belief that their superior was better informed of the situation. Calling on the support of their subordinates served as the quickest and easiest way for the Covenanters to increase their numbers. The examination of Clan Chisholm's support for the Covenant clearly portrays the regime's use of alliances in building their forces.

The key to understanding Clan Chisholm's loyalty to the Covenant lies in their relationship to the Frasers of Lovat and their neighboring clans. John Chisholm of Strathglass, also known as Chisholm of Comer, had a close relationship with the Frasers of Lovat dating back a generation prior to the Scottish Revolution. The inventory of Chisholm writs is dominated by transactions between the two clans, one of significance being a contract between John Chisholm and Simon Fraser, Lord Lovat, dated 13 March 1621. In this contract John Chisholm of Comer promised his attendance at Simon Fraser's "court" and promised his services to the Frasers.<sup>26</sup> There is no indication that this contract was reversed prior to the outbreak of the Bishops' War; therefore, the assumption can be safely made that the Frasers of Lovat called on the service of Chisholm of Comer as promised in the contract in support of the Covenant.

Added to the relationship between Chisholm and Fraser was the fact that Chisholm's territory was surrounded by Covenanters. The geographical position of the Clan Chisholm further illustrates that in some cases the safest course to take was to follow the dominant leader. The Frasers of Lovat encircled Chisholm's land and beyond the Frasers the nearest clans were the Grants and Munros, both committed

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<sup>25</sup> See Appendix 4: Clan Map with Civil War Allegiances.

<sup>26</sup> J. Munro, *Inventory of Chisholm Writs 1456-1810*, New Series 18 (Scottish Record Society, 1992), 17.

Covenanters, as well as the Earl of Seaforth, who had periods of Covenanting sympathy. Although Chisholm was Protestant and may have joined the Covenant Movement regardless of Fraser's influence, his unwavering support was ensured by the fact that he was the smallest out of the five clans and the obvious and safest course for Chisholm to follow was to side with their stronger neighbors to avoid the repercussions of breaking their bond with the Frasers and the possible attacks on their territory as an adversary.

Similar to the Covenanters' use of alliances in gaining support, the use of rivalries proved equally effective. A lingering effect of the feuds that occurred during the late 1500s and early 1600s was that a number of clans had either a score to settle or feared retribution from another clan. In the case of Clan Campbell, the clan as a whole feared the repercussions of their acquisition of MacDonald territory. Although many Scottish historians have discussed the Campbell-MacDonald feuds at length, the motive of rivalry amongst the Clan Campbell that arose from this long history requires a brief mention.

In general, Campbell loyalty was to the Marquis of Argyll and the Covenant Movement to rival the Clan Donald loyalty to the Marquis of Montrose and the crown. However, this rivalry was heightened by the fact that Charles I was promising to reinstate various MacDonald leaders in their hereditary lands that had been seized by the Campbells. Between 1603 and 1625 the Campbells had acquired roughly a quarter of MacDonald territory, including Kintyre, Ardnamurchan and Islay, which Charles I in his campaign for sympathy promised to Ranald MacDonnell, the Earl of Antrim, Donald Gorme MacDonald of Sleat, and Alasdair MacColla respectively.<sup>27</sup> There was little doubt in the minds of the Campbells and onlookers that these promises would result in massacres of Campbells to ensure that not only the Covenant but also the Campbells would be destroyed, thus allowing for the transfer of property. The threat to Campbell survival posed by the Clan Donald and their blood-relation to the MacDonnells in Ireland, who were ready to cross the Irish Sea for an invasion, was the main reason the Marquis of Argyll established a system of warning beacons along the western seaboard and manned the outposts

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<sup>27</sup> Stevenson, *Scottish Revolution*, 100; A. Macdonald & A. MacDonald, *The Clan Donald*, 4 vols. (Inverness, 1896-1904), ii, 56; D. Stevenson, *King or Covenant? Voices from the Civil War* (East Linton, 1996), 148.



around the clock with Campbells, as well as the motive behind his targeted attacks against various branches of MacDonalds.<sup>28</sup>

The use of rivalries in the recruitment of royalists within the Western Highlands and Isles was rooted in the territorial ambitions of the Marquis of Argyll and the Earl of Sutherland. The most important polarizing factor within the region prior to the Scottish Revolution was the maneuverings of the nobles in their attempt to strengthen their power. The way in which the Earls of Argyll and the Earl of Sutherland expanded their territory either threatened or victimized a large number of clans, especially the MacDonalds and the MacKays. Because the Marquis of Argyll and Sutherland supported the Covenant, support for their opposition provided the means to regain lands lost to the earls and the opportunity to wreak havoc on their aggressors.

The Clan Donald was opposed to Campbell expansion dating back to the 15<sup>th</sup> century. Most recently, the 7<sup>th</sup> Earl of Argyll had seized Islay and Kintyre through his destruction of the MacDonalds of Dunyveg in the early 1600s. Campbell's acquisition of this land gave rise to one of the most extreme cases of anti-Campbellism seen through the career of Alasdair MacColla. David Stevenson cleverly describes the mentality of MacColla; he "probably didn't give a damn about the king".<sup>29</sup> In fact, his allegiance to the king ranked sixth in a list of his personal priorities. At the top of MacColla's list was his allegiance to Clan Donald and the attempt to regain Kintyre and Islay. Like the Earl of Antrim, MacColla wanted to revive the Lordship of the Isles and renew the fame and fortune of Clan Donald, which, in effect, meant destroying the Clan Campbell. MacColla's hostility toward the Campbells manifested into a personal war against Argyll, resulting in a number of massacres of Campbells after royalist victories. MacColla's motive of revenge was made clear when he declined to involve himself in the invasion of England, and instead persuaded Montrose to allow him to lead the Irish regiment and a large portion of Highlanders into Argyll where he was able to fulfill his desire to enact revenge on the Clan Campbell by thoroughly devastating the region.

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<sup>28</sup> Stevenson, *Scottish Revolution*, 101.

<sup>29</sup> Stevenson, *King or Covenant*, 140.

Further evidence that the Clan Donald were in support of the royalist cause because it allowed for the killing of Campbells is seen through the vernacular poets of the Clan Donald. The most prolific of these poets was Iain Lom who acted as a wartime correspondent during the Scottish Revolution. His poem praising the military might of Clan Donald at the battle of Inverlochy on 2 February 1645 clearly shows the clan's hatred for the Campbells and the glee in their destruction:

'S lionmhor claidheamh claisghorm comhnard  
 Bha bualadh 'n lamhan Chlann Domhnaill.  
 'N uair chruinnich mor dhragh na falachd,  
 'N am rusgadh nan greidlean tana,  
 Bha iongnan Dhuibneach ri talamh  
 An deidh an luithean a ghearradh.<sup>30</sup>

[Numerous are the blue-fluted, well balanced swords that were wielded in the hands of Clan Donald. When the great work of blood-letting came to a height at the time of unsheathing slender swords, the claws of the Campbells lay on the ground with sinews severed.]

Although this battle was a major victory for the royalists, the vocabulary used by Iain Lom clearly indicates that the victory was seen as a triumph over the Campbells more than a defeat of the Covenanters. A second poem written in 1646, by an anonymous MacDonald, specifically addresses the desire to regain the former glory that was the Lordship of the Isles:

Gheibh gach cealgair mar thail e,  
 Theid gach traoitear a smaladh,  
 Cha bhi chuing oirn 'ga giulan,  
 'S chan'n fhaigh luchd diumbaidh an ailein,  
 Gun teid luchd nam beul fiara,  
 A chur sios fo ar sailean,  
 'S bidh Clann Domhnuill an uachdar,  
 Mar bu dual do'n an al sin.<sup>31</sup>

[Every rogue will get what he deserves, every traitor will be snuffed out. We will not have to bear the yoke and spiteful ones will not get their wishes. The Campbells will be under our heels and Clan Donald will be on top as is the custom of that progeny.]

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<sup>30</sup> As quoted in Macinnes, "Gaelic culture in the seventeenth century", 173.

<sup>31</sup> As quoted in Macinnes, "Gaelic culture in the seventeenth century", 175.



The reference made to the Campbells “under our heels” and the Clan Donald being “on top as is the custom of that progeny”, is a reference to the Campbell acquisition of the former territory of the Lordship of the Isles and the desire of the Clan Donald to reclaim what was hereditarily theirs. Not only do these two poems provide evidence of the rivalry and revenge motives of Clan Donald, but they also served as propaganda and inspiration for the clan’s attacks on the Campbells.

The opportunity to regain lands lost to the Clan Campbell was used by Charles to attract the support of Clan Donald. The fear of the MacDonalds began with a commission to Sleat and Antrim issued 5 June 1639. The commission named Sleat and Antrim “conjunctlie and severallie” His Majesty’s Lieutenants and Commissioners in the Western Highlands and Isles with full power to convocate the lieges and pursue Covenanters with fire and sword.<sup>32</sup> For doing so, Charles promised the lands of Ardnamurchan to Sleat and the land of Kintyre to the Earl of Antrim, both former MacDonald territories. In reality it is difficult to believe that Charles would restore the Lordship of the Isles and bestow it upon the Clan Donald, because it would decrease the crown’s authority and the revenues received from the region. If the lordship had been resurrected the Clan Donald, who had proven themselves to be a thorn in the side of the crown, would wield such power in the isles that they would be uncontrollable and could possibly function as a principality independent from any influence from the crown; however, this did not stop Charles from using the lordship as an incentive for the Clan Donald’s allegiance. Although the grants to the Clan Donald were illusory they appear to have been obtainable goals in the minds of the MacDonalds; the actions of the MacDonalds during the course of the royalists’ victories indicate that they were upholding their end of the agreement and were set on destroying the Clan Campbell in order to restore the lordship.

Since Clan Donald’s main objectives were the restoration of their lands and destruction of the Campbells, bribery was essential in maintaining their support of the crown. However, the use of bribery only added to the instability of the region as the MacDonalds used the conflict primarily for their own agenda; thus proving the Marquis of Hamilton’s warning to Charles that the Clan Donald would side with the

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<sup>32</sup> MacDonald & MacDonald, *Clan Donald*, ii, 720 & iii, 55-6.

king “not for anie great affection they caryie to your majesty bot because of ther spleen to Lorne and will dou if they durst just contrarie to whatt his men doeth”.<sup>33</sup>

A second clan that joined the royalist faction out of a rivalry with their local magnate was the Clan MacKay under the charge of Donald MacKay, Lord Reay. The mentality of the Clan MacKay had always been to die “in defence of their fathers’ lands”; this mentality resulted from the clan being caught in the middle of the hostilities between the Earls of Sutherland and Caithness.<sup>34</sup> Throughout the early part of the seventeenth century both earls were attempting to gain possession of Strathnaver and, subsequently, superiority over the Clan MacKay because of the value of their territory and their military strength. By 1625, the Earl of Sutherland had virtually destroyed Caithness leaving him near bankrupt and had partially ruined MacKay in the process. Sutherland’s territorial maneuvers and attempts to gain Strathnaver prompted MacKay to support the royalist cause in the northwest to counter Sutherland’s position as his superior.

At the beginning of the Scottish Revolution, MacKay’s actions were the product of his desire to avoid any unwise choices which might have resulted in his complete ruin. In a letter from the Committee of Estates Lord Reay’s attendance was requested at a meeting in Inverness where the commissioners would meet with local barons and gentlemen, “Informing yow truelie how loyalie we haue proceidit from the beginning”. This letter also implied that Reay’s non-attendance would be in defiance of his feudal superior, the Earl of Sutherland.<sup>35</sup> Because the royalists in the Highlands had not yet organized themselves, Reay was compelled to sign the National Covenant to prevent any attacks from the Earl of Sutherland. However, Lord Reay believed he had been tricked into treason by his subscription and sent his son to wait on the royalist Marquis of Huntly and to order arms for a royalist rising in Strathnaver.

Although Lord Reay had publicly sided with the Covenanters he soon came under suspicion as being a royalist. Two incidents occurred in March 1639 that prompted the Earl Marischal to state that MacKay was not a “good Covenanter”.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> HMC Report XI Appendix vi, MSS of Duke of Hamilton, 95.

<sup>34</sup> W. Fraser, ed., *The Sutherland Book* 3 vols (Edinburgh, 1892) ii, 152-3.

<sup>35</sup> NAS, Papers of Lord Reay, GD84/2/194.

<sup>36</sup> J. Spalding, *Memorialls of the Trubles in Scotland and England*, 2 vols. (Aberdeen, 1792), i, 163-4.



The first incident occurred when Montrose, while in command of the Covenanters, had taken the Master of Reay prisoner in March 1639 when Montrose attacked Huntly. The association between Huntly and the Master of Reay implied that a possible alliance was forming between the Clan MacKay and Huntly. The suspicions regarding Clan MacKay were manifested by the Covenanters' seizure of arms ordered for Strathnaver by the Master of Reay and Huntly. As John Spalding reported, "there was also taken by the Covenanters certain carbines, muskets, pikes, corslets and ammunitions pertaining to the Lord Reay, and taken out of an barque happening by chance to come to Petershead, as she was carrying them to Strathnaver, to the said Lord's country".<sup>37</sup> The loss of the cargo temporarily ruined Reay's scheme of a royalist rising in the north-west that was to be joined by the MacKenzies and Sinclairs.<sup>38</sup> However, the opportunity would present itself again due in part to Lord Reay's association with Christian IV of Denmark.

By the summer of 1642, Sutherland and the Gordons had increased their powers over Clan MacKay through Charles I's promotion of Sir Robert Gordon and the erection of the barony of Gordonstoun. The erection of the barony was intended to sway the Gordons' support in favour of the crown and to harness their influence to advance the levying of troops for the royalist cause; however, the promotion only served to weaken the king's position, as well as Lord Reay's. The powers granted to the Gordons gave them the authority to muster troops in MacKay country, primarily in the disputed area of Strathnaver, which reignited the hostilities between Sutherland and MacKay over superiority of the region. The grant to the Gordons allowed them to muster MacKay's men for the Covenant regime; thus reducing Lord Reay's authority over his own clansmen and prevented him from mustering his men for the royalists' army.<sup>39</sup>

In an attempt to thwart the Gordons, Lord Reay sailed to Denmark to gain the assistance of Christian IV. In November 1643, MacKay returned from Denmark with letters patent from Christian IV ordering him to raise a regiment of foot soldiers

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<sup>37</sup> Spalding, *Memorialls*, i, 137.

<sup>38</sup> A. MacKay, *The Book of MacKay* (Edinburgh, 1906), 138.

<sup>39</sup> I. Grimble, *Chief of MacKay* (Edinburgh, 1993), 134.

in Strathnaver to be transported to Denmark.<sup>40</sup> It is clear through this patent that Lord Reay and Christian IV intended to use the Thirty Years' War as a pretext for raising troops for Charles I, and the patent was a means to circumvent the authority of Sutherland within MacKay country and allow Reay to regain control over his own territory. Unfortunately for the royalists, Alexander Leslie, Earl of Leven, took MacKay prisoner when MacKay returned from Denmark and partook in the fortification of Newcastle. While MacKay was held in the Tolbooth in Edinburgh the clan held a gathering in which they drew up a pact, which was to serve as a warning to Sutherland. The pact pledged that the Clan MacKay would not take part in any disloyal actions and would attack any who should try to "molest" them.<sup>41</sup> This pact made it clear that the whole name of MacKay were royalists and were determined to protect themselves against further encroachment by Sutherland, thus reiterating the mentality that they would die "in defence of their fathers' lands". Lord Reay was released from the Tolbooth when Montrose, now leader of the royalists, laid siege to Edinburgh in August 1645, and returned to Strathnaver in October where he continued his service for the royalists.

Local politics also played a large role in shifting allegiances as seen in the response of the Clan MacLean to the imprisonment of Sir Lachlan MacLean of Duart by the Marquis of Argyll. Looking at the history of the MacLeans of Duart it would be expected that the clan would have been one of the most dedicated adherents to the Covenant Movement because of their religious beliefs, affiliation with the Campbells of Argyll, and the effects of Charles I's Act of Revocation on the clan. However, the MacLeans of Duart were one of the many clans in the Western Highlands and Isles that shifted their allegiance to the royalist cause. At the outbreak of the Scottish Revolution, Sir Lachlan attempted to remain neutral out of prudence and lack of financial resources, but actions of the Marquis of Argyll against Sir Lachlan MacLean forced the MacLeans of Duart to join the royalists.

Traditionally, the MacLeans of Duart were staunch Protestants and allied to the Campbells of Argyll. The two clans had joined forces in the suppression of the Catholic rising in Ireland, known as Tyrone's Rebellion, and in the destruction of the

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<sup>40</sup> Grimble, *Chief of MacKay*, 138; original patent is in Latin in NAS, Papers of Lord Reay, GD84/2/197.

<sup>41</sup> NAS, Papers of Lord Reay, GD84/2/200.



Catholic MacDonalds of Dunyveg. Both campaigns cost the MacLeans a great deal of money, and by 1625 the clan was facing serious financial difficulties. Charles I's Act of Revocation further complicated the monetary troubles of the clan, when Charles singled out Sir Lachlan to return church lands feued to his family in the 1570s by John Carswell, Bishop of the Isles. The letter from Charles to Sir Lachlan stated, "we do will and command you restore unto the Bishop the absolute possession of the said Island [Iona] without further hearing or delay".<sup>42</sup> The combination of the religious position of the MacLeans and the forced forfeiture of Iona would have given Sir Lachlan enough reason to side with the Covenanters, but the lack of funds to support a regiment played a larger role in his decision to remain neutral. It was not until the Marquis of Argyll took actions against Sir Lachlan that the MacLeans of Duart took an active part in the Scottish Revolution for the royalists.

The first sign of strain between MacLean and Argyll was the result of the campaign against the MacDonalds of Dunyveg. MacLean had joined the 7<sup>th</sup> Earl of Argyll in destroying the MacDonalds on the assumption that MacLean would gain the Rinns of Islay as compensation, a region that had been disputed between the MacDonalds and MacLeans since the 1580s. However, instead of granting the lands to MacLean, Argyll used his position at court to arrange for the entire island of Islay to be granted to Campbell of Cawdor, leaving MacLean with no compensation for his efforts.<sup>43</sup> Troubles between MacLean and Argyll continued to escalate until 1639 when the Marquis of Argyll had Sir Lachlan imprisoned in Carrick Castle for one year. Argyll claimed he imprisoned MacLean on the grounds of outstanding debt. Argyll had begun acting as a debt consolidator for many clans, including MacLean, as part of his expansionist agenda;<sup>44</sup> but the MacLeans claimed their chief was imprisoned for refusing to sign the National Covenant and join Argyll. As a

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<sup>42</sup> *Collectanea de Rebus Albanicis* (Iona Club, 1848), 185-6.

<sup>43</sup> C. Innes, ed., *The Book of the Thaness of Cawdor: A Series of Papers Selected from the Charter Room at Cawdor, 1236-1742* (Spalding Club, 1859), 237.

<sup>44</sup> For more on financial problems of clans and the role of Argyll see: F. Shaw, *The Northern and Western Islands of Scotland: Their Economy and Society in the Seventeenth Century* (Edinburgh, 1980), 43-6; "The Ewill Trowbles of the Lewes", J.R.N. MacPhail, ed., *Highland Papers*, 4 vol. (SHS, 1914-1934), ii, 262-88; "The Genealogie of the Surname of M'Kenzie", J.R.N. MacPhail, ed., *Highland Papers*, 4 vols. (SHS, 1914-1934), ii, 2-68; Macinnes, *Clanship, Commerce and the House of Stuart*, 74-5.



result of the Clan MacLean's belief that Argyll had acted against Sir Lachlan because of political and not financial reasons, "friends" of Sir Lachlan met at Bunessan in the Ross of Mull where, according to the *Minutes of the Synod of Argyll*, "they agreed some conclusions contrary to the Covenant".<sup>45</sup> This meeting was the first step taken by the MacLeans of Duart and "friends" to align themselves with the royalists in opposition to the Marquis of Argyll.

With the support of the clan already inclined toward the royalist faction, Sir Lachlan seized his opportunity to publicly declare for the royalists after Argyll's defeat at Inverlochy in February 1645. The MacLeans of Duart were among a long list of clans from the Western Highlands and Isles that met Montrose at Killiwheim, near Elgin, and subscribed a band of loyalty to the king and the royalist army. The band swore allegiance to the king and bound all subscribers to "wse all the best and most vigorous oppositione against the Actors and Instruments of all those abominable and monstrous crymes".<sup>46</sup> Although Sir Lachlan's personal convictions, chiefly his devotion to Protestantism and his feud with MacDonald of Dunyveg, should have aligned him with the Covenanters, the need to protect his family from the encroachments of the Marquis of Argyll, one of the leading "Actors and Instruments" mentioned in the band, forced Sir Lachlan to side with the royalists. For the remainder of the royalists' military campaign the MacLeans of Duart remained steadfast supporters and distinguished themselves at the battles of Kilsyth and Inverkeithing.

One of the most complex characters during the Scottish Revolution was George MacKenzie, 2<sup>nd</sup> Earl of Seaforth. It is difficult to determine Seaforth's personal convictions because he changed allegiances numerous times between 1638 and 1649; the only dependable aspect of the Earl of Seaforth's career was that he was undependable. Seaforth's loyalty throughout the conflict shifted to the faction that was enjoying a temporary victory or to the faction that posed the greater threat to him at the moment. This shifting suggests that his motive was the desire to preserve his family and to stay on top of the social hierarchy within the Western Highlands and Isles, and clearly indicates that Seaforth's position within his locality

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<sup>45</sup> D.C. MacTavish, ed., *Minutes of the Synod of Argyll, 1638-61*, 2 vols. (SHS, 1943), i, 13-14.

<sup>46</sup> NAS, Montrose Papers, GD220/3/184.



directly influenced his actions on the national level. Although Seaforth's actions were unpredictable, his mustering capabilities remained unhampered. Neighboring clans, such as the MacRaes of Kintail, MacLeods of Assynt, and the majority of the MacKenzie branches, felt obliged to follow his lead making Seaforth's loyalty a benefit to whomever he chose to align himself with, further emphasizing the power that local politics within the Western Highlands and Isles had over national politics.

It appears that attempts by Seaforth to establish himself as a formidable force in the Western Highlands and Isles were hampered by the jurisdiction Argyll already held. For example, in March 1634 Seaforth had his power in the isles legitimized by a commission from the Privy Council to pursue and apprehend the Islesmen who were raiding Ross with further instructions to then turn the prisoners over to the Sheriff of Inverness. Just over a month later Lord Lorne, later Marquis of Argyll, had the commission changed; Seaforth was not to prejudice Lorne as Justiciar of the Isles and was to turn over any prisoners directly to Lorne for trial.<sup>47</sup> Similarly, in November 1641 Seaforth had his infetment of Lewis and Stornoway Castle ratified by an Act of Parliament which Argyll immediately protested against on the grounds that the ratification should be without prejudice to Argyll as Justiciar.<sup>48</sup>

A bond of friendship entered into by Seaforth and Argyll on 22 June 1638 indicates that these events did not cause too much animosity but it did keep Seaforth in a subservient position to Argyll.<sup>49</sup> In fact, on numerous occasions both men were appointed to the same service, such as the Justiciary Commission for Suppression of Crime in the Highlands on 3 December 1641 and the Commission for the Apprehension of Jesuits on 5 July 1642.<sup>50</sup> Furthermore, both Argyll and Seaforth sat in Parliament together no less than four times between 1639 and 1648.<sup>51</sup> As the two highest ranking nobles in the Western Highlands and Isles it appears that both men had an amicable relationship even though Argyll had the influence at court to manipulate or direct Seaforth's actions.

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<sup>47</sup> HMC, 6<sup>th</sup> Report, Appendix, MSS of Duke of Argyll, 625; HMC, 4<sup>th</sup> Report, MSS of Duke of Argyll, 487.

<sup>48</sup> APS, iv, 1625-41, 530 & 583.

<sup>49</sup> HMC, 4<sup>th</sup> Report, 483.

<sup>50</sup> RPC, vii, 165 & 288-9.

<sup>51</sup> The sessions attended together were in 1639, July 1641, August 1641, November 1641. APS, v, 251, 258, 308, 330, 425.

Unlike other clans, such as the MacLeans, who had tumultuous relations with Argyll, Seaforth does not appear to have used the Civil Wars as a means to overthrow Argyll's superiority. Although Seaforth's desire for self-advancement occasionally put his clan in opposition to the direction Argyll was leading, his maneuverings were intended to gain him power by aligning with the winning faction and were not directed at Argyll personally; Seaforth and Argyll did not meet on the field of battle as adversaries and Seaforth did not partake in the royalist ravaging of Argyllshire. In fact, when it served Seaforth's purpose he used his subservient position to Argyll to regain the Covenanters' trust as seen in the series letters between the Committee of Estates, Seaforth and Argyll regarding Montrose and MacColla's movements during the summer of 1644 and the direction Argyll wished Seaforth to take against them.<sup>52</sup>

The difficulty in determining the Earl of Seaforth's allegiance begins with the campaigning efforts of both the Covenanters and royalists. During the first half of 1638, both factions were actively pursuing the clans in the Western Highlands and Isles in an attempt to gain their support. By holding meetings, similar to the one attended by Lord Reay and the Earl of Sutherland in Inverness, the Covenanters were laying claim to a number of clans, while the Marquis of Hamilton was conducting his own recruiting campaign for the royalists' cause. The efforts of the two factions resulted in a number of clans being claimed by both groups. The Earl of Seaforth was one of the men who supposedly pledged his allegiance to the Covenanters; however a letter from Hamilton to Charles I indicates otherwise. In the letter, dated 15 June 1638, Hamilton reported the success of his recruiting efforts, which included the claim that Seaforth was to be in command of the Islesmen "who are at present reasonable".<sup>53</sup> If Seaforth was indeed the "king's man" in the Isles, which could have been an over-optimistic claim on Hamilton's part, he quickly changed positions when the Covenanters offered him the appointment of General of the Covenanting Army north of the Spey. As General, Seaforth led 4,000 men in May 1639 through Moray and remained encamped in Speyside until orders arrived to disband after the Treaty of Berwick was reached

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<sup>52</sup> NAS, Parliamentary Papers, PA/11/3/24v-25v.

<sup>53</sup> HMC Report XI Appendix vi, MSS of Duke of Hamilton, 95.



between Charles I and the Covenanters.<sup>54</sup> The reasoning behind the earl's first shift of allegiance seems to have been the fact that the Covenanters offered Seaforth a commission larger than the one the royalists were able to offer at the time.

By 1640, Seaforth's actions were under suspicion by the Covenanters. The combination of Charles I's march into York and the Earl of Montrose's defection to the royalists prompted the Covenanting Army to examine their ranks, and as a precautionary measure expelled or imprisoned suspected royalists. Among those brought before the Committee of Estates and warded in Edinburgh was the Earl of Seaforth on suspicion of his being a "lukewarm" Covenanter. After his escape, Seaforth met with the Earls of Traquair, Montrose, Wigtown, Atholl, and Hume in August 1641 where they collectively joined in a bond against the Covenanters. The bond, commonly known as the Cumbernauld Band, attacked the Covenant regime and the general course the movement was taking under the leadership of Argyll. Although he subscribed the Cumbernauld Band, Seaforth appears to have remained inclined toward the Covenant regime. In October 1644 Seaforth raised his men and joined the Covenanting Earl of Sutherland on his march into Spey. However, Montrose never reached Spey as he had heard of Argyll's movements in Lochaber and detoured to meet Argyll at Inverlochy. The battle at Inverlochy in January 1645 resulted in one of the royalists' largest victories, as Argyll fled the field of battle and Montrose's forces killed 1,500 Campbells.

Using the victory at Inverlochy to his advantage Montrose gained the support of many Covenanters out of fear of Montrose's army. Five days after the battle of Inverlochy Montrose drafted a bond of allegiance to the royalist cause at Killwheim which created a mass exodus of Covenanters, including Seaforth who signed in February 1645. Aligning with the royalists, Seaforth and his troops were among those listed in Montrose's ranks on his march toward Bog of Gight.<sup>55</sup> However, threats from the Covenanters' garrison at Inverness forced Montrose to allow Seaforth and others to return home to defend their estates. The possibility of an attack by the Covenanters' garrison persuaded Seaforth to ignore his oath of allegiance to the king and again join the Covenanters in order to protect his estate.

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<sup>54</sup> A. MacKenzie, *History of the Clan MacKenzie with Genealogies of the Principal Families* (Inverness, 1879), 184.

<sup>55</sup> MacKenzie, *History of MacKenzie*, 184-5.

Once Seaforth returned home he quickly tried to make amends with the Covenanters. Like many men who shifted allegiance, Seaforth claimed that he temporarily joined the royalists out of fear of Montrose. To prove his loyalty to the Covenanters he again raised his men and joined the Covenanting Army under the leadership of General Hurry. Although Seaforth was not totally committed to the cause and was apprehensive about taking on Montrose, he was persuaded by his own men to take to the battlefield alongside Hurry. Unfortunately for Seaforth, the battle of Auldearn was another royalist victory and he was ordered by Hurry to retreat. After the Covenanters' defeat at Auldearn in April 1645 and again at Alford in July Seaforth's loyalty to the Covenanters again began to waver. Out of frustration at the events in the north, Seaforth drafted a bond, which he called a Remonstrance, against the current condition of the government under the leadership of the Covenanters. The Covenanters reacted by declaring Seaforth an enemy of the public and had him excommunicated by the Church, to which Seaforth's response was to join Montrose for a third time at Inverness in April 1646.<sup>56</sup>

Seaforth's loyalty would shift, yet again, in 1648 to the Covenant regime as a result of a new series of inquisitions following the failure of the Engagement. The Engagement was an attempt by moderate Covenanters and royalists to release Charles I from custody. Although the attempt failed it prompted the Committee of Estates to re-inspect their ranks as they had done in 1640. Seaforth had not taken part in the Engagement but had remained loyal to the royalists since rejoining Montrose in 1646, and was being scrutinized by the Committee of Estates for his dealing with the royalist army. In order to preserve his estate and prevent persecution Seaforth reached an agreement with General Middleton who on orders from the Committee of Estates offered Seaforth the opportunity to make public penance at St. Giles' Cathedral in Edinburgh in exchange for his excommunication being lifted. Yet, the Earl of Seaforth's shifting allegiance would continue with his departure for Holland in 1649 to go to the newly proclaimed King of Scotland,

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<sup>56</sup> Sir Robert Gordon, *A Genealogical History of the Earldom of Sutherland: with a Continuation to the year 1651* (Edinburgh, 1813), 529.



Charles II.<sup>57</sup> While in exile, Seaforth accepted the position of Principal Secretary of State for Scotland in the exiled court of Charles II.<sup>58</sup>

Unfortunately, a letter written from the Earl of Seaforth to Charles I on 2 June 1646 does not help to shed light on the earl's true motives. The entry in the Historical Manuscripts Commission report records the letter in which Seaforth claimed:

For however both his affection and actions have been questioned...his endeavour was, is, and shall be to show himself a faithful Christian by contributing to the advancement of the Protestant religion, a loyal subject by conducting to his Majesty's honour and a true hearted patriot by studying the preservation of law and liberty, etc.<sup>59</sup>

It is possible that the Earl of Seaforth was a moderate Covenanter, one who supported the Church of Scotland but also wanted to preserve the king's authority, but this does not adequately explain why Seaforth changed his loyalty numerous times. The most likely scenario is that Seaforth wrote this letter in an attempt to get back in the king's good graces and to excuse his conduct in another attempt to protect his station within the Western Highland and Isles. Although there were no predatory clans nearby, as an earl his position within national politics had a clear relationship to his power and status in the locality. Being an earl who was caught on the losing side of a battle posed a threat to his estate, whereas being on the winning side enabled him to preserve his household and provided an opportunity to expand his territory emulating the Marquis of Argyll.<sup>60</sup> Throughout his career Seaforth strove to place himself on the winning team which meant a number of shifts in his allegiance. Seaforth proved himself to be an expert tactician and by taking an active part for whichever factions he aligned himself he was able to repeatedly gain acceptance and forgiveness for his transgressions.

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<sup>57</sup> Charles II was proclaimed King of Scotland in Edinburgh on 5 February 1649.

<sup>58</sup> MacKenzie, *History of MacKenzie*, 194.

<sup>59</sup> HMC Report XI, appendix vi, MSS of Duke of Hamilton, 110.

<sup>60</sup> In 1648 Seaforth used his allegiance to the royalists to enforce his claim to the previously disputed lands of Aluian and Ledmore held by Donald MacLeod of Assynt, now a Covenanter, and laid siege to MacLeod's castle. For details of the lawsuit filed by Donald MacLeod of Assynt against George MacKenzie, 2<sup>nd</sup> Earl of Seaforth, See chapter 4 "Central Government and the Western Highlands and Isles", p. 68-9

## IV

Between 1644 and 1645 the actions that resulted from the allegiances of the clans in the Western Highlands and Isles gave rise to a period of instability in which local issues tended to take precedence over the political platforms of the Covenanters and royalists. Though a number of clans in the region did adhere to the traditional platforms of the two factions, a larger number used the conflict as a means to enhance their standings either as a result of retribution or avarice. The fact that the tides turned in favor of the royalists when the Western Highlands and Isles became involved indicates that the personal motives among the clans that laid the foundation for the region's local politics were vital to the success of either faction.

The division between the Covenanters and royalists throughout Scotland was based on religious and political differences. The Covenanters emphasized the removal of bishops from religious and secular office. An added element to the Covenanters' platform was their desire to limit the king's authority in reaction to Charles I's Act of Revocation that resulted in the forfeiture or threatened forfeiture of former church lands held by the laity. The combination of these two principles formed a revolutionary perspective toward the monarchy, chiefly the destruction of the theory of Divine Right in which the king was answerable only to God and the creation of a constitutional monarch answerable to parliament. The royalist faction within Scotland formed out of a desire to preserve the instruments of government that the Covenanters wanted to abolish. Although these were the theoretical platforms behind the two factions, the emphasis varied from region to region and person to person. The examination of the clans in the Western Highlands and Isles indicates that these principles were not the main driving force behind the formation of allegiances in the region; instead, the motives of the clans discussed here were formed primarily out of personal agendas rather than public issues.

Nearly all the clans in the Western Highlands and Isles had more than one motive for their actions; however, the mentality of self-preservation and self-advancement was the underlying basis to many allegiances. In looking at the allegiances of the Covenant regime in the region we find three prime motives, adherence to the Covenanters' cause, alliances and rivalries, and territorial



expansion. With the exception of those, such as Grant of Freuchie and MacLeod of Dunvegan, who actually believed in and supported the religious and political platforms of the faction, a number of those who aligned with the Covenanters had an underlying personal agenda. Opposition to the king was out of a need to defend the clan from an authoritarian king and power-hungry bishops, thus constituting self-preservation. The motives of alliances, rivalries, and territorial expansion arose from the mentality of self-advancement. The Marquis of Argyll's commission against the royalists in the Central Highlands is an example of one who was motivated to take an active part in the military campaign of the Covenanting regime by the opportunity to acquire land. The chronology of Argyll's actions in Atholl indicates that he was acting independent from the regime and belatedly requested a commission from the Committee of Estates to legitimize his territorial conquest; thus his personal agenda came before the public.

A similar conclusion can be drawn when looking at the motives behind the royalists within the Western Highlands and Isles. A clear indication that the personal agendas of the clans came before the public cause is seen through the continuation of rivalries between clans. A majority of the royalist clans aligned themselves with the crown in an attempt to thwart or enact revenge on a Covenanting clan. As seen through the actions of the MacKays and MacDonalds the motivation for siding with the royalist faction was to maintain their land and if possible to regain lands lost to the Earl of Sutherland and the Marquis of Argyll. Because the nobles were Covenanters, the MacKays and MacDonalds were able to use the public issues between the two factions to promote their own cause.

It is because of the importance of self-preservation and self-advancement that threats and bribery were common in the Western Highlands and Isles. The use of threats spawned a third division within the region, those who switched allegiances. It is through the examination of clans who defected from one group to the other, and often back again, that the instability of the area is highlighted. Depending on the current political situation, a number of clans were forced to change their allegiance to protect their lands from invasion. The shifting of allegiances became more common with the rise of Montrose and the resulting series of royalist victories. The majority of clans who changed their position were

Covenanters who were fearful of Montrose's forces, as is evident through the mass exodus of Covenanters following the royalist victory at Inverlochy.

The battle of Inverlochy was a major turning point in the Scottish Revolution. It was during this battle that the leader of the Covenanters, the Marquis of Argyll, fled the battlefield, deserting his troops, while the MacDonalds partook in the killing of 1,500 Campbells, the largest post-battle massacre during the conflict. As a result of this defeat, a large contingent of Covenanting clans met with the Marquis of Montrose at Killiwheim, near Elgin, and pledged their loyalty to the crown.<sup>61</sup> Similar to many who switched their allegiance to the royalists, the Earl of Seaforth claimed on more than one occasion that his service in the royalist ranks was out of fear of Montrose and his Irish Army. Even the most ardent supporters of the Covenant could not ignore the dangers posed to their estates. Among those who met Montrose was the staunch Covenanter, James Grant of Freuchie, who sent 300 men to join Montrose's ranks and in a Proclamation from Montrose was to lead all persons in Badenoch, Strathavin, Glenlivet, Glenrinnnes and Moray against the Covenanters.<sup>62</sup> Because the loyalty of the clans in the Western Highlands and Isles was influenced by a need for self-preservation, and they could be forced to switch sides at any moment, neither faction could wholly rely on their support. The use of threats to the clans' existence and property played a significant role in both the instability of the region and the success of the royalists between 1644 and 1645.

Not only did threats prove a valuable incentive to align with the Covenanters and royalists, but the use of bribery, widely employed by Charles and the royalists, was an equally important tool. The use of bribery in the Western Highlands and Isles was most effective when directed at clans who wished to regain forfeited territory; thus playing on the personal agendas of the clans. As is evident in the study of the Clan Donald's motives, the restoration of their hereditary land was the primary issue behind their allegiance to the royalists.

The Covenanters neglected to use the personal agendas of the clans in the Western Highlands and Isles to their fullest potential; instead it was the royalists who were able to capitalize on the survivalist mentality and dominate the mid 1640s.

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<sup>61</sup> NAS, Montrose Papers, GD220/3/184

<sup>62</sup> Fraser, ed., *Chiefs of Grant*, i, 260 & ii, 15-6



Prior to 1644, the primary clan mobilized by either faction was Campbell of Argyll and they were employed by the Covenanters to defend and monitor the region. The active participation of the remaining clans of the Western Highlands and Isles was not considered to be crucial to the overall success of either faction compared to other regions of Scotland. However, the need to defeat the Covenanters prompted Charles I and the Marquis of Montrose to actively recruit the military excellence of the region and ensured victory by giving the clans individual incentives, such as the opportunity given to the MacDonalds to kill Campbells. The combination of bribery from Charles and threats to person and property from Montrose clearly drew the clans of the Western Highlands and Isles into the Scottish Revolution by playing on their personal agendas and local politics, thus temporarily altering the course of the conflict in favor of the royalists.

## **Chapter 8**

### **Conclusion**

The allegiances of the clans in the Western Highlands and Isles are a significant component of the history of the Scottish Revolution because they add a further dimension to the complex sequence of events and patterns of allegiance development, including the motives behind them. What arises from a regional study of the Western Highlands and Isles is a better understanding of the causes of the royalists' dominance, as well as of the region in general. Furthermore, the motives behind the clans' adherence to one faction over another and the shifts in allegiance provide a great deal of information about the numerous social and political issues of the time, such as religious differences and the struggle for political dominance in the region which would have an indirect correlation to the clan's economic status. These issues along with how they influenced the Western Highlands and Isles clans can be extrapolated and applied to other regions in Britain. The actions taken by the nobility across Britain can be further understood and the magnitude of the Civil Wars made more comprehensible by applying the models for allegiance formation in the Western Highlands and Isles formulated by using religion, politics, and economics as primary factors.

It is a historical fact that the clans of the Western Highlands and Isles became involved in the conflict in 1644, but what is not clear is the reason why. The problem in attempting to answer this question is that each clan reacted to a certain set of circumstances unique to their current state of affairs. Many studies have approached this question from a single angle, primarily religion, but the ferocity and animosity between the clans is not fully comprehended until all the factors have been considered. Using a multi-stranded approach by analyzing the political, economic, and religious situation on the eve of the conflict and looking at how specific clans reacted to these factors helps to shed light on the mentality of the clans. It becomes clear that power, wealth, and faith coalesced, with some aspects taking precedence over others in the formation of allegiances.

A great deal of work has been conducted on the Scottish Revolution on a national level; however little attention has been given to the significance of regional



studies to facilitate a better understanding of the situation. By dividing the kingdom into regions and analyzing the importance, or lack thereof, of the national issues to the individual, a regional study allows for the debates to be put in context based on their relevance to the locality rather than by the importance that central government put on them. For example, by analyzing the effect that Charles I's religious innovations had on the Western Highlands and Isles it can be said that there was little, if any, significance due to the lack of a strong religious foundation. By contrast, Dr. Sharon Adams's research on the radical south-west points to a strong connection between the impact of Charles I's religious policies and the region's support for the Covenanters.<sup>1</sup> In looking at the allegiances of the Western Highlands and Isles in comparison to the south-west it becomes clear that the motives behind their allegiances were individually based in response to specific events or developments within the locality.

In order to clarify the motives behind allegiances, analysis of the political, religious, and economic situation within the Western Highlands and Isles and their effect on the chiefs provide the clearest means through which the region's involvement can best be seen. This chapter is intended to highlight specific issues within the region which served as indicators for the clans' allegiances.

The political situation prior to the institution of the annual meetings between the chiefs of the Western Highlands and Isles and the Privy Council was a period of virtual autonomy of the clans. Before 1616 the primary objective of the clans was political dominance in the region. The desire for dominance meant that there was a strong inclination to focus on local politics which would increase the clan's socio-political status in the region and relatively little attention was paid to events outside of the locality unless they had a direct effect on the socio-political hierarchy of the region. During this period the Western Highlands and Isles were seen by outsiders as lawless and violent because they practiced their own form of justice independent from the crown's legal system. For example, cattle thieving was a frequent occurrence in the region because of the potential it afforded to increase one clan's political position at the expense of another by destroying their source of wealth and

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<sup>1</sup> S. Adams, "A Regional Road to Revolution: Religion, Politics and Society in South-West Scotland, 1600-50", PhD thesis, University of Edinburgh (2000).



power, and it was an accepted practice within the clan system to retaliate and enact justice on a level equal to the offense. Therefore, it was customary that if one clan's cattle were stolen the clan would retaliate by stealing their aggressors' cattle. Although this process of administering justice was accepted and strictly regulated by the clans, it was viewed by central government as barbarous and uncivilized. This view of Highland justice was reinforced by the fact that few disputes were referred to the crown or courts for mediation or adjudication and the crown wielded relatively little power over the clans. Attempts by the crown to instill civility and to curb hostilities in the region were often regarded by the clans as merely a nuisance and had a minimal effect on the dynamics of the clan system.

It has been said that James VI's Highland policies during this period were a "scatter-gun" of pet-projects, private enterprises and quasi-official policies, all aimed at reducing the clans to obedience and civility.<sup>2</sup> The policies enacted prior to 1616 were not as successful as originally intended, such as the ill-fated campaigns of the Fife Adventurers in Lewis, because of the strength and independence of the clan system combined with the misconceptions of central government in its dealings with the region. However, central government's success rate significantly improved with the implementation of the 1616 Regulations which resulted in the promotion of the chiefs of the Western Highlands and Isles to the position of government agents being carried out on a large scale and no longer confined to superiors such as MacKenzies and Campbells.

The inclusion of a broader range of chiefs in the administration of the region shifted their attention towards central government as a source of political power and as an alternative means of local dominance. The chiefs were no longer forced to seek legitimacy through their manipulation of local politics and recurring violence. Similar to the process of integration of the Welsh elites as government agents during the mid sixteenth century, the Highland chiefs found it increasingly beneficial to cooperate with central government. As in Wales, a reciprocal relationship developed between the chiefs and central government that facilitated the process of state formation. By working within the existing framework of the clan system and

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<sup>2</sup> M. Lynch, "James VI and the 'Highland Problem'", in J. Goodare & M. Lynch eds., *The Reign of James VI* (East Linton, 2000), 216.



the region's socio-political hierarchy, the crown was able to promote its needs while at the same time meeting the needs of the chiefs by empowering them with commissions and licenses. The end result of the meetings and subsequent promotions of chiefs to government agents was an increase in the clans' involvement in national politics and a decrease in the levels of lawlessness and violence. Unfortunately, the relationship between the chiefs and central government was damaged by the dissolving of the annual meetings.

The Western Highlands and Isles chiefs then reverted to their customary practices with which they had previously acquired their status. The fact that the chiefs were no longer able to gain legitimacy from central government meant that the clans had again to enforce their political dominance through manipulation of the region's socio-political dynamics. As seen in the cattle thieving and murder carried out by the MacDonalds of Glengarry and the land dispute between MacLeod of Assynt and the Earl of Seaforth, the renewed emphasis on local issues brought about attempts to destroy neighboring clans' resources.<sup>3</sup> In looking at the events surrounding the bloodfeud between MacDonald of Glengarry and Mackintosh of Torcastle it becomes evident that theft and the process of Highland justice through retribution returned to their pre-1616 prominence.

The fact that the clans in the Western Highlands and Isles were increasingly preoccupied with local issues, such as land disputes, while central government was increasingly preoccupied with national issues, such as subscription to the National Covenant, resulted in limited interaction between the two parties. The result was that when central government came to direct its attention back to the Western Highlands and Isles during the Scottish Revolution, the chiefs were by then firmly in an autonomous position and it proved extremely difficult for the Committee of Estates to enlist the aid of the clans for mustering and maintenance in the mid 1640s.

Even though the political integration of the clan elites of the Western Highlands and Isles collapsed, the economic link between the Highlands and the Lowlands continued and the chiefs remained embedded in the debt market. Just as politics was a source of power and status, so too was financial wealth and solvency.

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<sup>3</sup> See chapter 4, "Central Government and the Western Highlands and Isles" for details of Glengarry's cattle thieving and MacLeod of Assynt's complaint against Seaforth.



As discussed in chapter six, between the 1570s and the 1640s there was a definite increase in the level of indebtedness among the clans. This increase in debt was primarily due to the political integration of the chiefs in the form of the annual meetings and was exacerbated by the financial impact of the Scottish Revolution.

Similar to Keith Brown's findings on the indebtedness of Lowland nobles,<sup>4</sup> conspicuous consumption was a major contributor to the financial difficulties of the Highland chiefs. Many chiefs partook of the luxurious Lowland lifestyle while residing in Edinburgh, which included gambling and wearing fine apparel as lamented by the MacLean bard, Eachann Bacach. Conspicuous consumption had a definite negative effect on the chiefs' coffers, yet there was also a definite benefit to be gained due to the visual representation of the clans' socio-economic status. By not only gambling but also purchasing draperies, silk, and, in the case of MacLeod of Dunvegan, an oven, the clans made an impressive statement regarding their wealth and prestige. The fact that visual displays of wealth were more important than the monetary reality of their accounts is evident in the testament of Sir Duncan Campbell of Glenorchy. The testament provided a balance sheet of assets and liabilities, with the assets clearly outweighing the liabilities. Included in the assets were movable goods, such as gold cups and silver spoons, which were visual representations of the clan's wealth, however the clan was still in a dire financial situation because they lacked actual money. As a result of the importance of feasting as a means of displaying wealth and the chief's eminence, the clan was reluctant to sanction the selling of moveable goods, even though to do so would have resolved their monetary difficulties. Due to the fact that the socio-economic position of many clans was vulnerable as a result of the increasing debts of the chiefs, the devastation caused during the conflict was directed at both the visual representations of wealth as well as the actual monetary income of the clans. During the military campaign of Montrose and MacColla, the royalist army became notorious for their destruction of the Covenanters' estates, especially the Campbell estates. Stealing cattle, burning crops and houses, and stealing movable goods all undermined the socio-economic

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<sup>4</sup> See K. Brown, "Aristocratic Finances and the Origins of the Scottish Revolution", *English Historical Review* 104 (1989); K. Brown, *Noble Society in Scotland* (Edinburgh, 2000).



position of the Covenanting nobles, thus further reducing their influence in the locality.

Whereas there were clear indications that politics and economics would play a large role in the development of allegiances within the Western Highlands and Isles, due to their impact on local politics and social status, the religious situation in the region appears to have had less influence. To understand the religious circumstances in the Western Highlands and Isles a bottom up view of the state of religion is necessary, adopting the inhabitants' perception of religion rather than the viewpoint of the Church of Scotland and the Irish Franciscan Mission whereby both religions were claiming success and exaggerating their difficulties in establishing their respective churches in the region. What emerges from this perspective is a lack of a strong religious foundation which is exemplified in the difficulty in breaching the Gaelic language barrier and the difficulty in accessing places of worship.

The inhabitants had an indifferent view of the Church of Scotland, largely due to the lack of an adequate ministry. The fact that a strong religious organization was lacking for many in the Western Highlands and Isles was not only the fault of the Church of Scotland but also the failure of the Irish Franciscan Missions. The result was that neither the Protestant nor the Catholic religion was adequately equipped with both the ability and the resources to properly provide for the strong establishment of their respective church in the region. This is not to say that the inhabitants were not religious; they still maintained their beliefs and customs, but the majority of the inhabitants of the Western Highlands and Isles could very well be classified as non-practicing due to the limitations of the church in its attempt to establish places of worship with satisfactory ministers and to provide an adequate doctrine in the region.

Where the Covenanters and royalists could have hoped to win support was among the Highland elites who maintained some form of religious service within their household, such as the Campbells of Argyll and the Captain of Clanranald. However, support for the Covenanters, or even for the royalists, based on religious beliefs was only one component in the development of allegiances. The simple truth was that the religious connotations behind the Scottish Revolution had relatively little impact on local politics and social status. For many clans, adherence to one



faction or the other had a coincidental relation to their religious preference and was primarily associated with their network of alliances. The promotion of one religion or the other had no direct impact on the political or economic situation in the Western Highlands and Isles other than the benefits available by aligning oneself with the victorious faction, but again this had little to do with religion itself and more to do with the fruits of victory. The defection of MacLean of Duart and Campbell of Edinample, brother of Campbell of Glenorchy, to the royalist ranks indicates that their protestant beliefs were outweighed by other factors. For MacLean of Duart his primary concern was the maneuvering of Campbell of Argyll against him personally as well as his clan, while Campbell of Edinample deserted his family in favor of his loyalty to the king. Evidently, the religious components of the Covenanters and the royalists were not enough to dissuade these two devout protestants from acting on their principal concerns unrelated to their religious beliefs.

The development of allegiances was a direct result of the power struggle in the Western Highlands and Isles that arose after the collapse of the annual meetings which provided a source of political power derived from central government. Although the issue of power and the importance of local politics can be applied to varying degrees in every region involved in the Civil Wars, the overwhelming significance it played in the Western Highlands and Isles marks the region as an extreme case. The renewed emphasis on legitimacy of power which could be derived from the locality gave rise to a series of personal agendas of which self-preservation and self-advancement were primary, and it was these which eventually dictated allegiances.

The reason for the delayed and short-lived involvement of the region was because neither the Covenanters nor the royalists took the initiative to offer any incentives which would have an effect on the socio-political hierarchy within the Western Highlands and Isles. The loss of power which had previously been gained by the chiefs through their closer relationship with central government and the subsequent neglect of the region resulted in the Western Highlands and Isles lacking a vested interest in the national platforms of the two factions. The issues of religious innovations and landownership were less significant to the chiefs than the political



dominance of the Clan Campbell. Of special concern was the political and economic maneuvering of the Campbells of Argyll.

Archibald Campbell, Marquis of Argyll, wielded a great deal of power in the Western Highlands and Isles. Through his position as Justiciar of Argyll and the Isles and as a high ranking official within the Covenant regime, Argyll left little room for other clans to partake in the distribution of power in the region. As a result, the region's involvement in the Scottish Revolution was based primarily on the opportunity to regain or expand clan territory and to gain financial rewards from military victories, both incentives having a definite effect on the socio-political hierarchy of the region. Due to the fact that land value was closely linked to social and political status the military campaigns were characterized by territorial devastation in an attempt to diminish various clans' position within the locality. Consequently, support for the Covenanters and royalists was closely related to the patterns of alliances and rivalries which dated back to the sixteenth century. The current conflict was used as justification for clans to continue their feuds and attempt to restructure the hierarchy within the Western Highlands and Isles. As a result, the Clan Campbell became prime targets because of the number of clans they had alienated through their political and economic maneuvers in the region.

The fact that the Campbells were at the top of the political hierarchy and were primary creditors for many chiefs created a political and economic situation that gave rise to much anti-Campbell sentiment. Although anti-Campbell sentiment was the primary motive behind the personal agendas and the subsequent involvement of the region in the conflict, it was not necessarily Campbell versus MacDonald. Although the majority of the clans victimized or threatened by the Campbells were MacDonalds, the conflict escalated into a broader struggle involving a large portion of the clans in the Western Highlands and Isles against the dominance of the Campbell network.

In view of the fact that Argyll was a high ranking official in the Covenant regime, support for the Covenant was partially confined to the Campbell network. The Covenant regime's strong reliance on the power of Argyll meant that the regime was limited in its attempt to manipulate the political or economic situation in the region to its advantage which would enable them to increase their recruits, because



to do so would require the demotion of Argyll. As a result, the clans that flocked to the Covenanters' banner were clans which had escaped Argyll's manipulations or were already incorporated into the Campbell network. Conversely, the royalist regime was in a prime position to take advantage of the region's struggle against Campbell dominance.

Although the army of Montrose and MacColla was fluid and subjected to the ebb and flow of the clans there is a clear indication that as the royalists were gaining strength at the expense of the Campbells, primarily Argyll, the ranks of the royalist army swelled with Highlanders opposed to the power and influence Clan Campbell held over them. After MacColla's recruiting campaign in the Western Highlands and Isles in October 1644 the list of men recruited doubled the existing army to roughly 3,000, while his second recruitment in July 1645 resulted in 1,400 men being raised in arms.<sup>5</sup> Further evidence of the animosity towards the Campbells is seen in the number of men who joined MacColla after he departed Montrose's company in September 1645. The fact that MacColla led such a large number of men in his attacks on Campbell property in Argyllshire serves as further evidence that the desire to topple the current political hierarchy was a major cause for the region's involvement in the conflict.

The fact that the royalists took advantage of the anti-Campbell sentiment that was running rampant in the Western Highlands and Isles is also evident in the limited time the region was involved in the conflict. The departure of MacColla from the royalist ranks broke the tie between the clans of the Western Highlands and Isles and the royalist regime as Montrose on his own could not offer the same benefits as MacColla. Unfortunately for those still fighting in Argyll, MacColla's later flight to Ireland left the clans without his ingenuity and command which hindered their ability to wreak havoc on the Campbells and the region's involvement dwindled to the point where the clans returned to their original patterns of feuds and forays.

This study set out to determine the factors behind the clans' allegiances during the Scottish Revolution by analyzing the political, religious, and economic

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<sup>5</sup> See Chapter 2 "The Western Highlands and Isles in Context". Numbers compiled from D. Stevenson, *Highland Warrior: Alasdair MacColla and the Civil Wars* (Edinburgh, 2003).



factors which would influence allegiance to the Covenanters and royalists. What emerged was not a strong adherence to the national political issues surrounding the Scottish Revolution, but rather an overwhelming emphasis on the socio-political hierarchy in the region and the opportunities the campaigns afforded the clans to influence local politics and to alter the region's dynamics. Prof. Allan Macinnes's statement that the espousal of the Covenanting cause served as a "cloak" for territorial ambitions can be applied on a large scale to explain the relevance of national issues on a local level.<sup>6</sup> Within the Western Highlands and Isles the importance of national politics was its ability to legitimize the struggle for political dominance within the locality. By aligning with a nationally based faction the clans were able to justifiably attack their adversaries who had aligned with the rival faction.

Although support for the Covenanters and royalists allowed for the continuation of hostilities between clans, for the remainder of the Wars of the Three Kingdoms the clans of the Western Highlands and Isles took relatively little part in the conflict. By distancing themselves from central government for a third time during the first half of the seventeenth century, the clans renewed their feuds and refocused their attention on issues directly related to local politics.

While the royalist campaign of 1644-5 was successful in devastating large portions of the Campbell estate, it did little in the way of altering the political and economic situation which prompted the Western Highlands and Isles to become involved. The issue of Campbell dominance, both politically and economically, continued to be a primary concern for many clans long after their involvement in the Scottish Revolution. The success of the radical kirk party furthered the Marquis of Argyll's political power and continued to foster the threat he posed to the region, particularly to the Clan Donald and the MacLeans of Duart. However, numerous risings and rebellions occurred between 1645 and 1745 which could have afforded the clans of the Western Highlands and Isles opportunities to accomplish their mission begun in the royalist campaign of 1644, but the region did not partake in subsequent activities on the level they had during the Scottish Revolution.

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<sup>6</sup> A Macinnes, "Gaelic culture in the seventeenth century: polarization and assimilation", in S. Ellis & S. Barber eds., *Conquest and Union: Fashioning a British State, 1485-1725* (New York, 1995), 173.



During many of the military campaigns which occurred in the hundred years following the Scottish Revolution the participation of the clans in the Western Highlands and Isles was not deemed acceptable to the instigators of the risings. Although Highlanders would constitute the majority of the armed forces, the clans of the Western Highlands and Isles were considered a liability rather than an asset due to their actions during the Scottish Revolution. Many of the clans, especially the Clan Donald, were able and willing to raise arms but their offers to serve were repeatedly declined. A prime example of this is the recruitment of forces for the Engagement of 1647-8 which specifically excluded the involvement of “malignants” because of the desire of the Engagers to legitimize their campaign and to appeal to the moderate Covenanters.<sup>7</sup> By excluding “malignants”, the clans of the Western Highlands and Isles were not enlisted even though they were willing to join because of the Engagers’ opposition to the Marquis of Argyll.

A similar situation occurred when Montrose returned from exile in what would be his final attempt to overthrow the kirk party. In 1649 Montrose raised forces in Orkney and sailed to Caithness in 1650, but did not enlist the clans which had proved beneficial to his cause in 1644. As David Stevenson points out, the choice to sail to Caithness rather than to the Western Highlands suggests that Montrose was “determined that the royalist causes should not, as in 1644-5, be dependent on the fickle western clans”.<sup>8</sup> The actions of the western clans during the Scottish Revolution were indeed fickle because their motive for involvement was the destruction of the House of Argyll and not for the causes at the heart of the royalist regime; the opportunistic nature of the clans’ involvement resulted in their following their own agenda rather than Montrose’s.

A number of Highland activities in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century were primarily the product of the clans of the central and eastern Highlands. The involvement of Highlanders during Glencairn’s Raising, the Highland Host, and the Jacobite Risings was markedly lacking participation of the clans of the Western Highlands and Isles. Armed forces for Glencairn’s Rising in 1653 were recruited from the Lowlands and central Highlands with the exception of Cameron of Lochiel

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<sup>7</sup> D. Stevenson, *Highland Warrior: Alasdair MacColla and the Civil Wars* (Edinburgh, 2003), 268.

<sup>8</sup> Stevenson, *Highland Warrior*, 270.



and MacDonald of Glengarry. Similarly, the recruitment of men for the Highland Host in 1678 was carried out in the eastern Highlands while the 1689 Rising again included few clans from the west. The situation changed slightly during the Jacobite Rising of 1715 when the Jacobites welcomed the involvement of the clans from the Western Highlands and Isles. The list of clans that joined in the Jacobite cause included the MacDonalds of Clanranald, MacDonalds of Glengarry, and the MacKenzies but again the majority of support was from the central Highlands. Although Highland recruitment in general increased between 1715 and 1745, so that during the 'Fifteen they constituted 70 percent of the army at Sheriffmuir and 94 percent of the army at Prestonpans during the 'Forty-five,<sup>9</sup> the activities of the Royal Navy had a definite impact on the Jacobites' recruitment capabilities within the Western Highlands and Isles. A number of clans, especially the MacNeils of Barra, Clanranald, MacLeans, and Camerons were forced to remain at home to defend their estates from the "terrorist attacks" of the Royal Navy.<sup>10</sup>

When the royalist campaign of 1644-5 is put in context and compared with subsequent Highland activities it becomes clear that the events of 1644-5 were unique. The level of involvement of the clans in the Western Highlands and Isles during the Scottish Revolution was not to be equaled during the next hundred years. Events that have been classified as Highland risings, such as Glencairn's Rising and the Jacobite Risings, clearly did not implicate the entire Highland region. Although anti-Campbell sentiment continued through to the Jacobite Risings and was widespread, the Western Highlands and Isles played a very limited role even though they appeared to have the greatest incentive to participate, the possibility of finally destroying the dominance of the Clan Campbell. Unfortunately for the clans of the Western Highlands and Isles, the opportunity to alter the political dynamics in the region was lost after the defeat of the Jacobite forces at Culloden on 16 April 1746.

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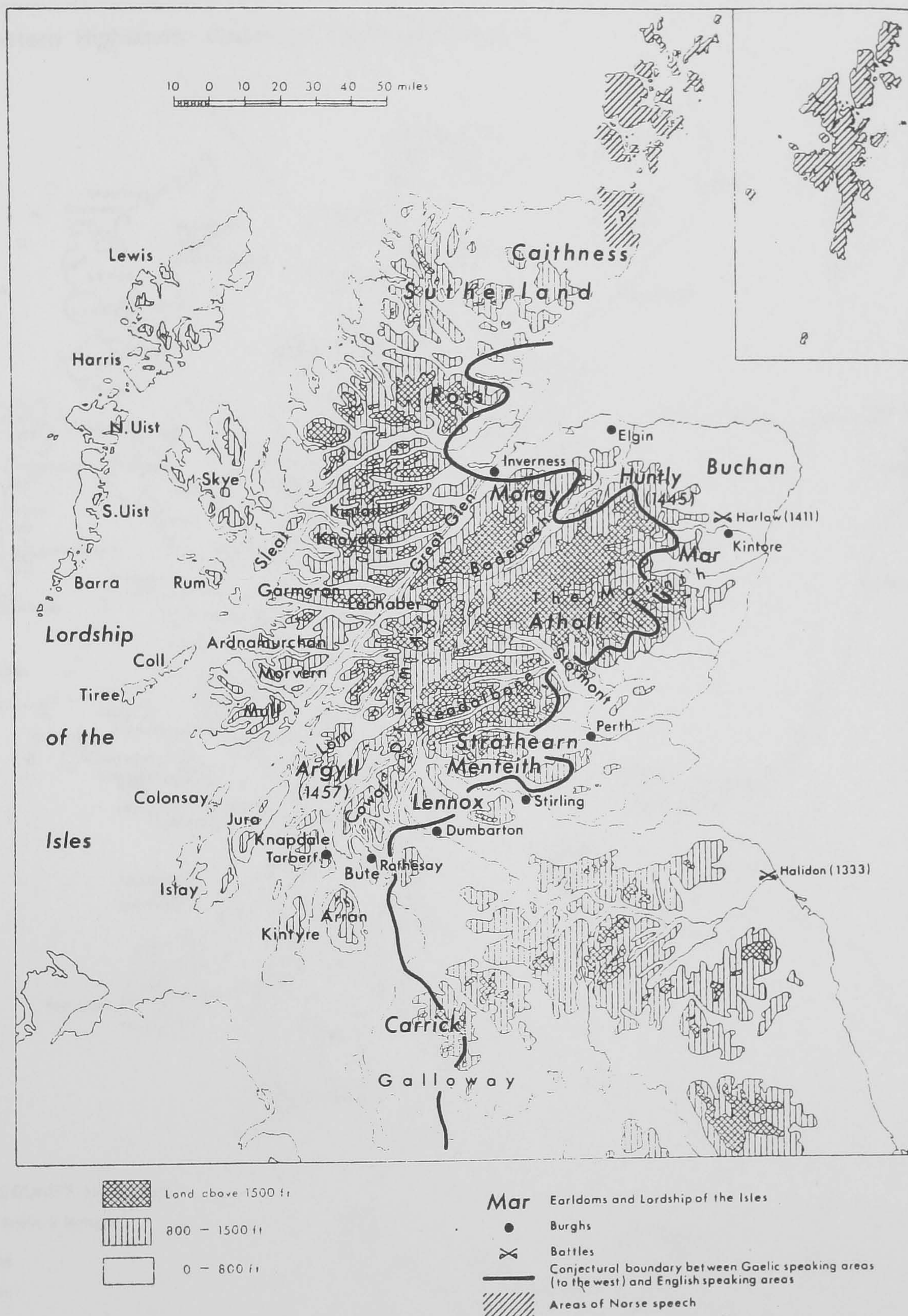
<sup>9</sup> A. Macinnes, *Clanship, Commerce and the House of Stuart, 1603-1788* (East Linton, 1996), 163.

<sup>10</sup> B. Lenman, *The Jacobite Clans of the Great Glen, 1650-1784* (London, 1984), 159; B. Lenman, *The Jacobite Risings in Britain, 1689-1746* (Aberdeen, 1980), 248.



## Appendix 1

Map: The Highlands c.1400

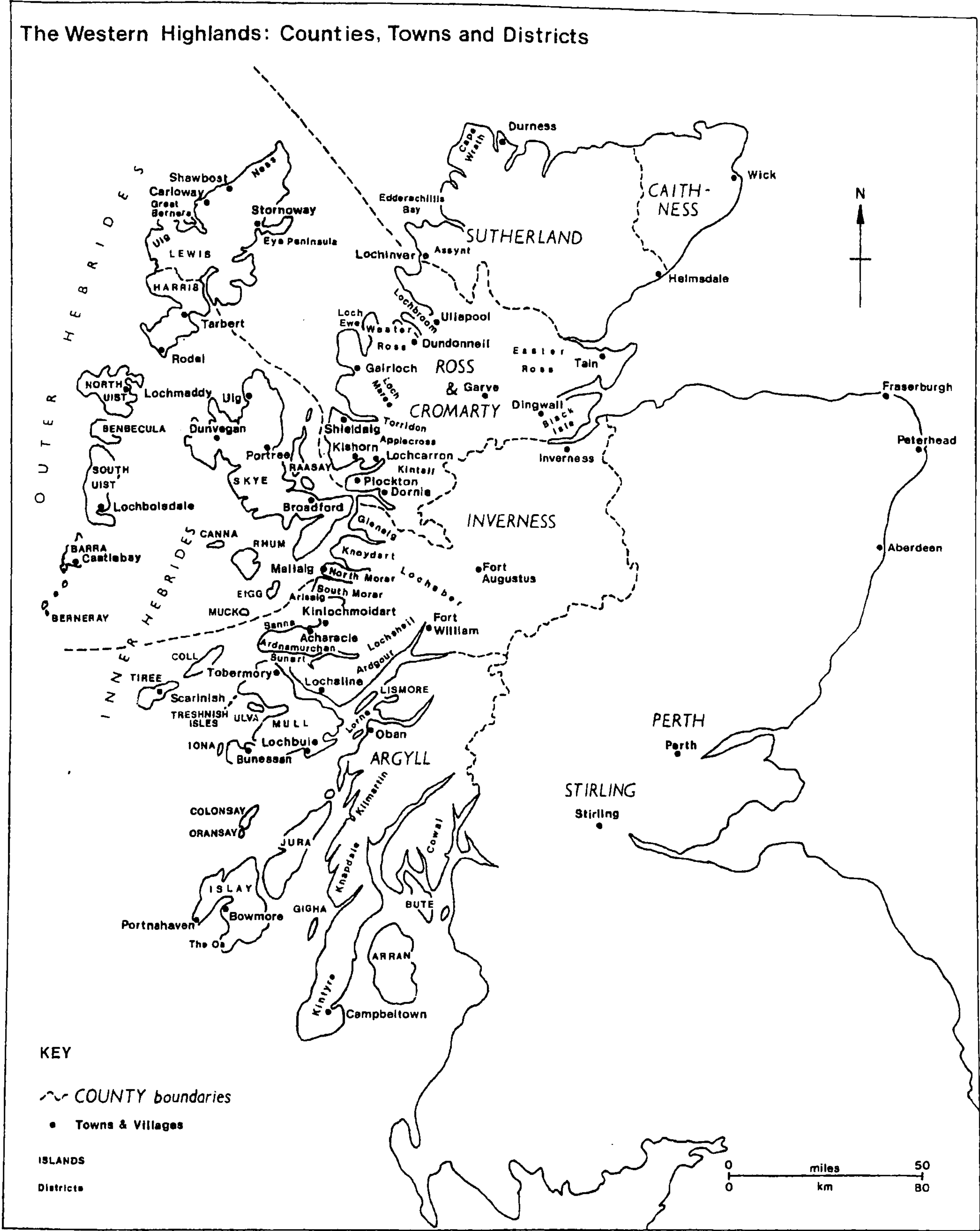


Source: P. McNeill & R. Nicholson (eds.), *An Historical Atlas of Scotland c.400-1600* (St. Andrews, 1975), 178.



**Appendix 2**

**Map: The Western Highlands**

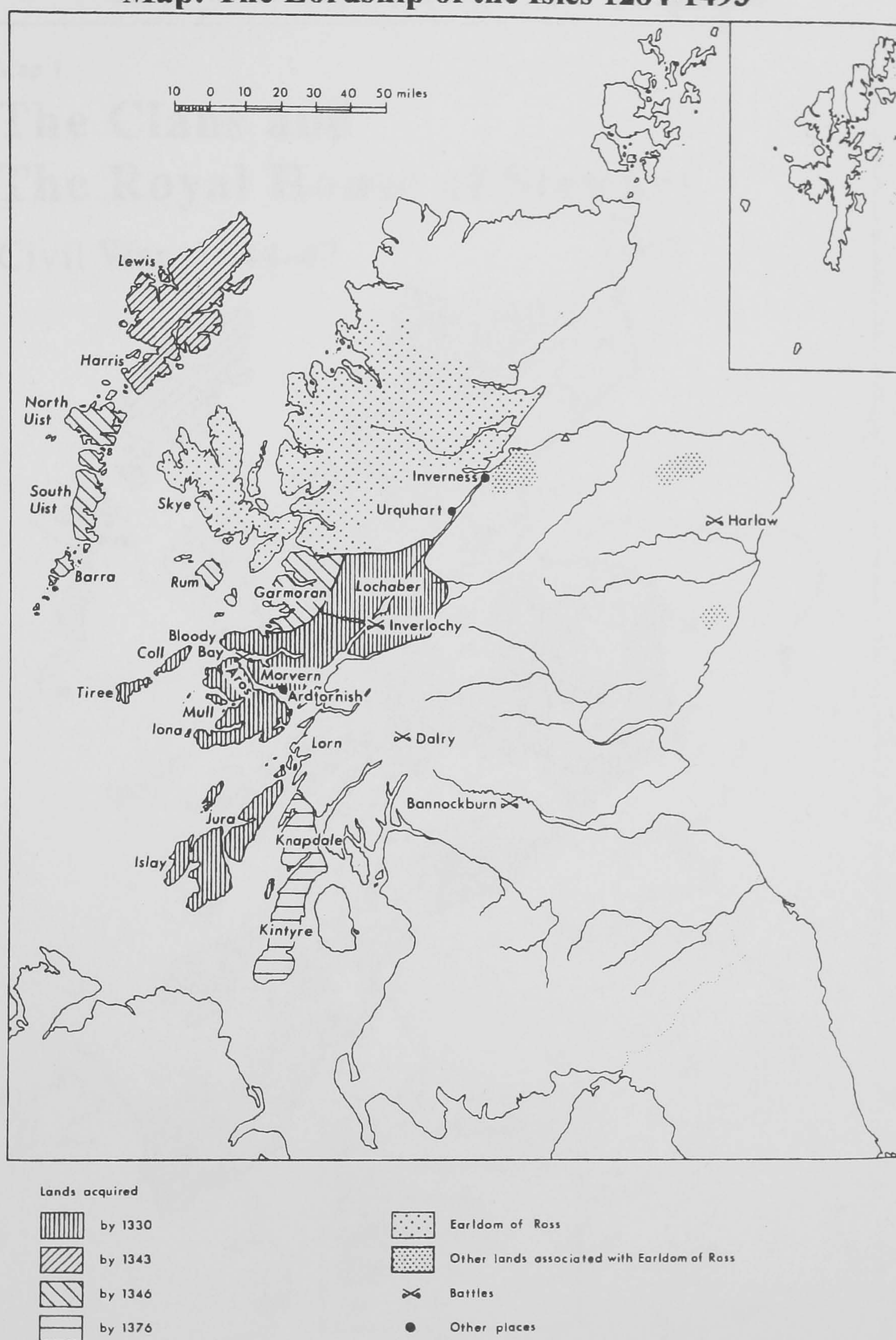


Source: T. Devine, *The Great Highland Famine: Hunger, Emigration and the Scottish Highlands in the Nineteenth Century* (Edinburgh, 1988), xvii.



## Appendix 3

### Map: The Lordship of the Isles 1284-1493

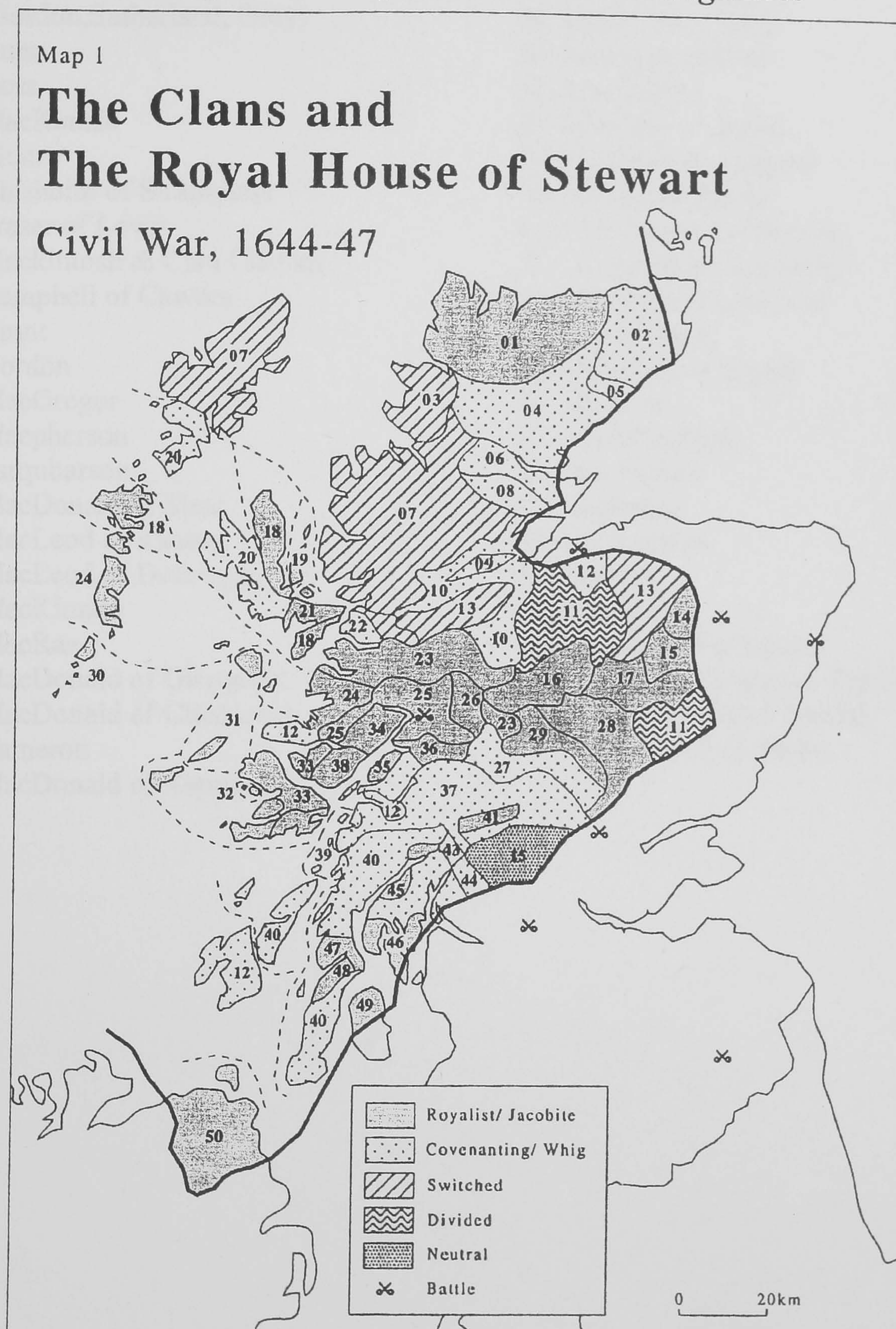


Source: P. McNeill & R. Nicholson (eds.), *An Historical Atlas of Scotland c.400-1600* (St. Andrews, 1975), 176.



## Appendix 4

### Map: Clan Map with Civil War Allegiances



Source: A. Macinnes, *Clanship, Commerce and the House of Stuart, 1603-1788* (East Linton, 1996), 242.



1. MacKay
2. Sinclair of Caithness
3. MacLeod of Assynt
4. Sutherland Men  
(Gordon, Sutherland, Gray)
5. Gunn
6. Ross
7. MacKenzie
8. Munro
9. Chisholm of Strathglass
10. Fraser of Lovat
11. Mackintosh & Clan Chattan
12. Campbell of Cawdor
13. Grant
14. Gordon
15. MacGregor
16. Macpherson
17. Farquharson
18. MacDonald of Sleat
19. MacLeod of Raasay
20. MacLeod of Dunvegan
21. MacKinnon
22. MacRae
23. MacDonald of Glengarry
24. MacDonald of Clanranald
25. Cameron
26. MacDonald of Keppoch
27. Menzies
28. Atholl men  
(Stewart, Murray & Ferguson)
29. Robertson
30. MacNeill of Barra
31. MacLean of Coll
32. MacQuarry
33. MacLean of Duart
34. MacLean of Ardgour
35. Stewart of Appin
36. MacDonald of Glencoe
37. Campbell of Glenorchy
38. MacLaine of Lochbuie
39. MacDougall
40. Campbell of Argyll
41. MacNab
42. MacNaughton
43. MacFarlane
44. Buchanan
45. MacLachlan
46. Lamont
47. MacAllister
48. MacDonald of Largie
49. MacNeill of Gigha & Taynish  
(& MacDonald of Sanda)
50. MacDonnell of Antrim



Appendix 5

**Attendance Record of Annual Meetings 1616-1642**

Clans included in annual meetings:

MacDonald of Sleat  
Clanranald  
MacKinnon of Strathordale  
MacLaine of Lochbuie  
MacLean of Coll

MacLean of Duart  
MacLean of Morvern (1626)  
MacLeod of Dunvegan  
MacNeill of Barra (1629)

1616

Attended:  
Clanranald  
MacKinnon of Strathordale  
MacLaine of Lochbuie  
MacLean of Coll  
MacLean of Duart  
MacLeod of Dunvegan

Absent:  
MacDonald of Sleat, excused (ill)

1617

MacDonald of Sleat  
Clanranald  
MacKinnon of Strathordale  
MacLaine of Lochbuie  
MacLean of Coll  
MacLeod of Dunvegan

MacLean of Duart (sent brother, Lachlan)

1618

MacKinnon of Strathordale  
MacLaine of Lochbuie

MacDonald of Sleat  
Clanranald, excused  
MacLean of Coll, excused (ill)  
MacLean of Duart  
MacLeod of Dunvegan, excused

1619

MacDonald of Sleat  
Clanranald  
MacKinnon of Strathordale  
MacLaine of Lochbuie  
MacLean of Coll  
MacLean of Duart  
MacLeod of Dunvegan

1620 Privy Council cancels meeting  
next meeting to held February 1621

1621 (10 February)  
MacDonald of Sleat

Clanranald  
MacKinnon of Strathordale  
MacLaine of Lochbuie  
MacLean of Coll  
MacLean of Duart  
MacLeod of Dunvegan

1622  
MacLean of Duart, excused

MacDonald of Sleat  
Clanranald  
MacKinnon of Strathordale  
MacLaine of Lochbuie  
MacLean of Coll  
MacLeod of Dunvegan

1623  
MacDonald of Sleat, excused  
MacLean of Coll, excused  
MacLean of Duart, excused

Clanranald  
MacKinnon of Strathordale  
MacLaine of Lochbuie  
MacLeod of Dunvegan

1624  
MacDonald of Sleat, excused  
Clanranald, sent agent  
MacKinnon of Strathordale, sent agent  
MacLaine of Lochbuie, sent agent  
MacLean of Coll, sent agent  
MacLean of Duart, sent agent  
MacLeod of Dunvegan, excused

none attended



none attended	1625	MacDonald of Sleat, excused Clanranald, fined MacKinnon of Strathordale, fined MacLaine of Lochbuie, fined MacLean of Coll, fined MacLean of Duart, excused MacLeod of Dunvegan, excused
MacDonald of Sleat MacKinnon of Strathordale MacLaine of Lochbuie MacLean of Coll MacLean of Duart MacLean of Morvern MacLeod of Dunvegan	1626	Clanranald
MacDonald of Sleat Clanranald (late) MacLean of Coll (late) MacLean of Duart (late) MacLean of Morvern MacLeod of Dunvegan	1627	MacLaine of Lochbuie, fined MacKinnon of Strathordale
MacDonald of Sleat Clanranald (late) MacLaine of Lochbuie (late) MacLean of Duart MacLeod of Dunvegan	1628	MacKinnon of Strathordale, fined MacLean of Coll, excused MacLean of Duart, sent son, Lachlan MacLean of Morvern, sent brother Lachlan

1629

MacNeill of Barra (30 June)

MacDonald of Sleat, excused  
 Clanranald, excused  
 MacKinnon of Strathordale, excused  
 MacLaine of Lochbuie, fined  
 MacLean of Coll, excused  
 MacLean of Duart, fined  
 MacLean of Morvern, fined  
 MacLeod of Dunvegan, excused

1630

MacDonald of Sleat  
 Clanranald

MacLaine of Lochbuie  
 MacLean of Coll (late)  
 MacLean of Duart

MacLean of Morvern

MacLeod of Dunvegan

MacNeill of Barra (last meeting attended)

MacKinnon of Strathordale (presumed ill)

1631

MacDonald of Sleat, excused  
 Clanranald, fined  
 MacKinnon of Strathordale, excused  
 MacLaine of Lochbuie, fined  
 MacLean of Coll, excused  
 MacLean of Duart, fined  
 MacLean of Morvern, excused  
 MacLeod of Dunvegan, excused  
 MacNeill of Barra, excused

1632

MacLeod of Dunvegan

MacDonald of Sleat, excused  
 Clanranald, excused  
 MacKinnon of Strathordale, excused (ill)  
 MacLaine of Lochbuie, excused  
 MacLean of Coll, excused  
 MacLean of Duart, excused  
 MacLean of Morvern, excused



	1633	MacDonald of Sleat Clanranald MacLean of Duart MacLeod of Dunvegan	MacKinnon of Strathordale MacLaine of Lochbuie MacLean of Coll MacLean of Morvern
none attended	1634		MacDonald of Sleat, excused Clanranald, excused MacKinnon of Strathordale, excused MacLaine of Lochbuie, excused MacLean of Coll, excused MacLean of Duart, excused MacLean of Morvern, excused MacLeod of Dunvegan, excused
MacDonald of Sleat MacLean of Morvern MacLaine of Lochbuie (late)	1635		Clanranald, sent agent MacKinnon of Strathordale MacLean of Coll MacLean of Duart MacLeod of Dunvegan
	1636		MacDonald of Sleat, sent agent Clanranald, sent agent MacKinnon of Strathordale, sent agent MacLaine of Lochbuie, absent MacLean of Coll, sent agent MacLean of Duart, sent agent MacLean of Morvern, sent agent MacLeod of Dunvegan, absent
none attended	1637		MacDonald of Sleat Clanranald MacKinnon of Strathordale MacLaine of Lochbuie MacLean of Coll MacLean of Duart MacLean of Morvern MacLeod of Dunvegan

none attended	1638	MacDonald of Sleat, excused Clanranald, excused MacKinnon of Strathordale, excused MacLaine of Lochbuie, excused MacLean of Coll, excused MacLean of Duart, excused MacLean of Morvern, excused MacLeod of Dunvegan, excused
none attended July or November	1639	MacDonald of Sleat, charge issued Clanranald, charge issued MacKinnon of Strathordale, charge issued MacLaine of Lochbuie, charge issued MacLean of Coll, charge issued MacLean of Duart, charge issued MacLean of Morvern, charge issued MacLeod of Dunvegan, charge issued
none attended, no record of attempt	1640	MacDonald of Sleat Clanranald MacKinnon of Strathordale MacLaine of Lochbuie MacLean of Coll MacLean of Duart MacLean of Morvern MacLeod of Dunvegan
none attended, no record of attempt	1641	MacDonald of Sleat Clanranald MacKinnon of Strathordale MacLaine of Lochbuie MacLean of Coll MacLean of Duart MacLean of Morvern MacLeod of Dunvegan



	1642 (April)	
none attended, order ignored		MacDonald of Sleat, ordered to appear
		Clanranald, ordered to appear
		MacKinnon of Strathordale, ordered to appear
		MacLaine of Lochbuie, ordered to appear
		MacLean of Coll, ordered to appear
		MacLean of Duart, ordered to appear
		MacLean of Morvern, ordered to appear
		MacLeod of Dunvegan, ordered to appear

Compiled from *RPC*, x (1613-16)- 2<sup>nd</sup> series, vii (1638-43)



**Appendix 6**

**Royal Rent Payments from Argyll and Portions of Inverness-shire,  
1600-1635**

E24/22, 1600-1

Feuar of Dundonald (Campbell)	£123
Feuar of Urquhart, Glencairn, Glenmor (Grant)	£172
Feuar of Bute (Campbell)	£142 16s. 8d.
Feuar of Cowal (Campbell)	£72 6s. 8d.
John Chisholm	53s 4d.
Angus MacDonald (Islay and Kintyre)	£2,000

E24/23, 1601-2

Feuar of Bute (Campbell)	£142 16s. 8d.
Feuar of Cowal (Campbell)	£72 6s. 8d.
Angus MacDonald (part payment for Kintyre)	£93 6s. 8d.

E24/24, 1602-3

Feuar of Dundonald (Campbell)	£64
Feuar of Urquhart, Glencairn, Glenmor (Grant)	£172
Feuar of Bute (Campbell)	£142 16s. 8d.
Feuar of Cowal (Campbell)	£72 6s. 8d.

E24/25, 1603-4

John Chisholm	53s. 4d.
Lachlan MacLean of Duart	£3,333 6s. 8d.

E24/26, 1604-5

Feuar of Dundonald (Campbell)	£64
Feuar of Urquhart, Glencairn, Glenmor (Grant)	£344
Feuar of Bute (Campbell)	£142 16s. 8d.
Feuar of Cowal (Campbell)	£72 6s. 8d.
Angus MacDonald (Kintyre)	£2,000
Archibald MacDonald (Islay)	£1,533 6s. 8d.

E24/27, 1605-6    Missing



## E24/28, 1606-7

Feuar of Dundonald (Campbell)	£32
Feuar of Bute (Campbell)	£142 16s. 8d.
Feuar of Cowal (Campbell)	£72 6s. 8d.

## E24/29, 1609-10

Feuar of Bute (Campbell)	£162 16s. 2d.
Feuar of Cowal (Campbell)	£72 6s. 8d.
Angus MacDonald (Islay and Colonsay)	£3,000
Lachlan MacLean of Duart	£9,958 3s.

## E24/30, 1611-12

Feuar of Urquhart (Grant)	£4 15s. 4d.
Feuar of Glencairn (Grant)	£172
Feuar of Dundonald (Campbell)	£33
Feuar of Cowal (Campbell)	£128 6s. 8d.
Feuar of Bute (Campbell)	£162 16s. 2d.
Clanranald	£165 6s. 8d.
Lachlan MacLean of Duart	£2,308
Sir Rory MacKenzie, Tutor of Kintail	£533 6s. 8d.

## E24/31, 1612-13

Feuar of Cowal (Campbell)	£72 6s. 8d.
Feuar of Bute (Campbell)	£142 16s. 2d.
MacDonald of Sleat	£3,000
Sir Rory MacKenzie, Tutor of Kintail	£133 6s. 8d.
Lachlan MacLean of Duart	£1,538

## E24/32, 1613-14

Feuar of Dundonald (Campbell)	£64
Feuar of Bute (Campbell)	£172 16s. 2d.
Sir Rory MacKenzie, Tutor of Kintail	£400
Clanranald	£124

## E24/33, 1614-15

Feuar of Dundonald (Campbell)	£32
Feuar of Bute (Campbell)	£142 16s. 2d.
Feuar of Urquhart (Grant)	£8 15s. 4d.
MacDonald of Sleat	£262 6s. 8d.
Sir Rory MacKenzie, Tutor of Kintail	£266 13s. 4d.

## E24/34, 1615-16

Feuar of Urquhart (Grant)	£12 17s. 4d.
Feuar of Bute (Campbell)	£142 16s. 2d.
Sir Rory MacKenzie, Tutor of Kintail	£266 13s. 4d.

## E24/35, 1616-17

Feuar of Dundonald (Campbell)	£64
Feuar of Bute (Campbell)	£162 16s. 2d.
Feuar of Islay (Campbell)	£12,000
Feuar of Colonsay, Ardnamurchan, Sunart (Campbell)	£490 2s. 4d.
Feuar of Kintyre and Jura (Campbell)	£2,000
Feuar of Cowal (Campbell)	£72 6s. 8d.
Sir Rory MacKenzie, Tutor of Kintail (including Mull, Morvern)	£1,533

## E24/36, 1617-18

Feuar of Dundonald (Campbell)	£32
Feuar of Bute (Campbell)	£172 13s. 4d.
Feuar of Islay (Campbell)	£1,500
Feuar of Colonsay, Ardnamurchan, Sunart (Campbell)	£490 2s. 4d.
Feuar of Kintyre and Jura (Campbell)	£2,000
Sir Rory MacKenzie, Tutor of Kintail (including Mull, Morvern)	£1,666 13s. 4d.
Clanranald	£2,408

## E24/37, 1618-19 (badly damaged)

Feuar of Dundonald (Campbell)	£32
Feuar of Bute (Campbell)	£162 16s. 2d.
MacDonald of Sleat	missing
Sir Rory MacKenzie, Tutor of Kintail	£1,333 6s. 8d.

## E24/38, 1620-1

Feuar of Urquhart (Grant)	£13 4s.
Feuar of Colonsay, Ardnamurchan, Sunart (Campbell)	£490 2s. 4d.
Feuar of Kintyre and Jura (Campbell)	£2,000
Feuar of Islay (Campbell)	£6,000
Feuar of Bute (Campbell)	£162 16s. 2d.



## E24/39, 1621-22

Feuar of Colonsay, Ardnamurchan, Sunart (Campbell)	£490 2s. 4d.
Feuar of Kintyre and Jura (Campbell)	£2,000
Feuar of Islay (Campbell)	£6,000
Feuar of Bute (Campbell)	£162 16s. 2d.
MacDonald of Sleat	£666 13s. 4d.

## E24/40, 1622-23

Feuar of Colonsay, Ardnamurchan, Sunart (Campbell)	£490 2s. 4d.
Feuar of Kintyre and Jura (Campbell)	£2,000
Feuar of Islay (Campbell)	£6,000
Feuar of Bute (Campbell)	£162 16s. 2d.
Sir Rory MacKenzie of Coigarth, formerly Tutor of Kintail	£833 6s. 8d.

## E24/41, 1623-24

Feuar of Colonsay, Ardnamurchan, Sunart (Campbell)	£480 2s. 4d.
Feuar of Kintyre and Jura (Campbell)	£2,000
Feuar of Islay (Campbell)	£6,000
Feuar of Bute (Campbell)	£162 16s. 2d.
MacDonald of Sleat	£533 13s. 4d.

## E24/42, 1624-25

Feuar of Colonsay, Ardnamurchan, Sunart (Campbell)	£480 2s. 4d.
Feuar of Kintyre and Jura (Campbell)	£2,000
Feuar of Islay (Campbell)	£6,000
Feuar of Bute (Campbell)	£162 16s. 2d.

## E24/43, 1625-26

Feuar of Colonsay, Ardnamurchan, Sunart (Campbell)	£480 2s. 4d.
Feuar of Kintyre and Jura (Campbell)	£2,000
Feuar of Islay (Campbell)	£6,000
Feuar of Bute (Campbell)	£162 16s. 2d.

## E24/44, 1626-27

Feuar of Colonsay, Ardnamurchan, Sunart (Campbell)	£480 2s. 4d.
Feuar of Kintyre and Jura (Campbell)	£2,000
Feuar of Islay (Campbell)	£6,000
Feuar of Bute (Campbell)	£162 16s. 2d.

## E24/45, 1627-28

Hector MacLean of Duart	£1,616 13s. 4d.
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## E24/46, 1628-29

Feuar of Colonsay, Ardnamurchan, Sunart (Campbell)	£907 8s. 7d.
Feuar of Kintyre and Jura (Campbell)	£4,000
Feuar of Islay (Campbell)	£12,000 6s. 8d.
Hector MacLean of Duart	£1,616 13s. 4d.

## E24/47, 1629-30

Feuar of Colonsay, Ardnamurchan, Sunart (Campbell)	£480 14s. 3d.
Feuar of Kintyre and Jura (Campbell)	£2,000
Feuar of Islay (Campbell)	£6,000 13s. 4d.

## E24/48, 1630-31

Feuar of Colonsay, Ardnamurchan, Sunart (Campbell)	£480 14s. 3d.
Feuar of Kintyre and Jura (Campbell)	£2,000
Feuar of Islay (Campbell)	£6,000 13s. 4d.
Feuar of Bute (Campbell)	£162 16s. 2d.
Feuar of Oronsay (Campbell)	£5 1s. 8d.

## E24/49, 1631-32

Feuar of Colonsay, Ardnamurchan, Sunart (Campbell)	£480 14s. 3d.
Feuar of Kintyre and Jura (Campbell)	£2,000
Feuar of Islay (Campbell)	£6,000 13s. 4d.
Feuar of Oronsay (Campbell)	£5 1s. 8d.

## E24/50, 1632-33

Feuar of Colonsay, Ardnamurchan, Sunart (Campbell)	£480 14s. 3d.
Feuar of Kintyre and Jura (Campbell)	£2,000
Feuar of Islay (Campbell)	£6,000 13s. 4d.
Feuar of Oronsay (Campbell)	£5 1s. 8d.

## E24/51, 1633-34

Feuar of Colonsay, Ardnamurchan, Sunart (Campbell)	£480 14s. 3d.
Feuar of Kintyre and Jura (Campbell)	£2,000
Feuar of Islay (Campbell)	£6,000 13s. 4d.
Feuar of Oronsay (Campbell)	£5 1s. 8d.



E24/52, 1634-35

Feuar of Colonsay, Ardnamurchan, Sunart (Campbell)	£480 14s. 3d.
Feuar of Kintyre and Jura (Campbell)	£2,000
Feuar of Islay (Campbell)	£6,000 13s. 4d.
Feuar of Oronsay (Campbell)	£5 1s. 8d.

Compiled from NAS, Exchequer Records, E24

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